

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

CHARLES LAMB

Prose & Poetry

With Essays by

HAZLITT & DE QUINCEY

With an Introduction by

GEORGE GORDON

and Notes

OXFORD : AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

THE Frontispiece is from the painting by Francis Stephen Cary in the National Portrait Gallery.

The introduction was originally written as the Centenary Notice of the *Essays of Elia* in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and is reprinted here with some alterations.

The selection has been made by Mr. Gordon. The Notes are by Mr. A. M. D. Hughes.

FIRST PUBLISHED APRIL 1921
REPRINTED SEPT. 1921, 1922, 1924, 1925, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1937
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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INTRODUCTION

A VISITOR to London in August, 1820, must have remarked an unusual animation in the life of that city. The season was over, but very few people seemed to have gone. The theatres were still running, well after their usual time, Mr. Kean announcing, for August 19, his last performance in the character of Othello before his 'positive departure' for America. Wherever one went, in London or about, there were soldiers quartered or on guard. It was said, with some excitement, that a gunboat could be seen lying off in the Thames; and there, sure enough, it was, facing Cotton Garden, while a certain great lady passed through the streets to the tribunal of the Lords escorted by 'young men on horseback' and cheering crowds of 'well-dressed persons' whom the *Courier* called a 'mob'. We are in the month of the celebrated Trial of Queen Caroline—the fourth act of a Royal drama, never, perhaps, in the very best style, which had swept all England into one gigantic Chorus, and by something, we must suppose, Corinthian in its proportions, had roused the least worldly of statists, first gentleman of London, modest-hearted Ch— L—b, to the chivalry of invective rhyme. He who had declined six years before to triumph with his countrymen over Napoleon's fall, because the man was great and in the dust, and persisted in liking men who 'frowned upon Trafalgar'—who in earlier days, in the very chaos and thunder of the new-born world, had found Burnet's 'Own Times' more seasonable than all that the friends of the Revolution could write—this generous and homely freethinker was

for once with the majority. There was only one side for him, the side of the weak, and he was a 'Queen's man' always.

It will be readily understood that no other topic, at such a time, stood much chance. Even the reported opening of the Regent's Canal, that 'singular example of British industry and enterprise', and the prophecy, punctually fulfilled at daybreak on the 23rd, of still another Continental revolution, failed to obtain that share of public notice which Portugal and the engineering interests had a right to expect. Only here and there a few idle people, neither of the great Vulgar nor the small, lazily glancing at the current pages of the *London Magazine* and voting it otherwise a weak number, found time to ask themselves, and in the end to ask each other, the unusual question, 'Who is Elia?' It was a short article, or rather essay, of some four pages, describing in an assumed character—for it was not to be supposed that the man had been a clerk—and yet it seemed not all invented—the life of a great house of business fallen into decay; with commemorations, quick and affectionate, of its inhabitants, a queer assemblage—odd fishes, a lay monastery—and yet perhaps to another eye they might have been dull enough—now chirruping, most of them, in the shades. The style of the piece was of an older fashion and yet new, with such felicities of phrase and pretty rhetorical modulations as seemed to smile back upon their maker; a style now brief and plain, now running into little catches hanging loose, one would say, upon the score, yet somehow masterfully concerted, and knocking, it could not be denied, most strangely at the heart.

Reader, in thy passage from the Bank—where thou hast been receiving thy half-yearly dividends (supposing thou art a lean annuitant like myself)—to the Flower Pot, to secure a place for Dalston, or Shacklewell, or some other

> thy suburban retreat northerly—dids't thou never observe a melancholy looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedlestreet abuts upon Bishopsgate ? . . . This was once a house of trade. . . .

Can it be wondered that the question was asked, or that at this distance of time, surveying events from our centennial *speculum* or watch-tower, we pronounce this, on the whole, the question of the month ?

The answer was scarcely more readily to be guessed at from the man himself than from the essay, though he was in London at the time (his yearly holiday over), and living, in free commerce with his friends, where in those years he most loved to be, in the general noise and resort of all London—'the individual spot I like best in all this great city'—among the theatres and flower-sellers of Covent Garden. Any one in the habit of traversing this region, says Barry Cornwall, by merely extending his walk a few yards into Russell-street

> might have noted a small spare man, clothed in black, who went out every morning and returned every afternoon, as regularly as the hands of the clock moved towards certain hours. You could not mistake him. He was somewhat stiff in manner, and almost clerical in his dress; which indicated much wear. He had a long, melancholy face, with keen, penetrating eyes; and he walked with a short, resolute step, City-wards. He looked no one in the face for more than a moment, yet contrived to see everything as he went on. No one who ever studied the human features could pass by without recollecting his countenance; it was full of sensibility, and it came upon you like a new thought, which you could not help dwelling upon afterwards; it gave rise to meditation and did you good. This small half-clerical man was—Charles Lamb.

So Elia, in his day-hours, looked and moved. He was in the first novelty of the character; a man of forty-five, with his golden years unexpectedly opening upon him[*]; heavily tried in what are called the sorrows of the world,

but with a gift for consolations; his chief friend and lifelong companion an elder and ailing sister only less lovable than himself; enduring the drudgery of the desk because bread, as he would say, was dear and publishers the devil (' those fellows hate *us* '); with no great love for the society of what are called ' good people ', but choosing his companions, his *intimados*, for some individuality of character which they showed—' if they liked something, if they took snuff heartily, it was sufficient ': in short, a whole man, moving firmly in his orbit, devoted to his sister, his folios, his friends, and his puns, and living, upon principles rather practised than avowed, one of the bravest and happiest lives in England. ' His enjoyments are so pure and hearty ', a young lawyer noted in his diary of this year, ' that it is an enjoyment to see him enjoy.'

Why he dressed as he did, in this Quakerish or Methodist habit, we shall perhaps never know; but as he adopted the custom early, it is conjectured that a distaste for change, or what he called uprooting, and a dislike of being mistaken for a poet or one of the professed *literati*, may have had something to do with it. It has even been suggested that there was a certain modesty and order in the matter, as of one who retains his rank. He was of humble birth, the son of a gentleman's servant, but in a happy and sometimes lonely childhood had learned the power of the emotions to annihilate distance. ' The solitude of childhood ' (he is speaking of Blakesware in Hertfordshire)

is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me . . . I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond; and to have taken, if but

dispensed with as any work of fancy and imagination in the language'. I confess that I find this difficult to understand. It does not seem possible that the best critic of his age, living, however privately and unprofessionally, in the very whispering place of movements; from whose casual observations neither Coleridge nor Hazlitt, the official interpreters of the period, disdained to borrow texts; the chosen gossip and counsellor, when they most needed counsel, of the Romantics of the Lakes; and one of the first leaders in that rejuvenation of Shakespearian and Jacobean study for which his age is still remembered and which is working still, not merely in the text-books, but in the latest verses of the latest of our poets—it does not seem possible that such a figure could be dispensed with from our histories of literature, and dismissed, with whatever garlands, to an ornamental exile with Sir Thomas Browne. I believe, on the contrary, that if Lamb were so dismissed his existence could be inferred; that even if he were removed it would be necessary to invent him. Too much has been made of the idiosyncrasies of Lamb's work, and too little of what is normally excellent in it. There is much in Lamb, even in the language and style of the Essays of Elia, which bears the stamp of its time. Elia is not all fantastic. It was not of his Essays that he was thinking when he declared his intention to cut the age and write 'for Antiquity'. When he wishes to do so, he writes like a man of his time. There are many passages in Elia, and even whole pages, written in the very idiom of the day (so, of course, as 'with a difference'), which Hazlitt might conceivably have written in his best moments, writing without a glance at old Burton, simply as well as he could—Hazlitt, that Lamb *in circumbendibus*, who kept the highway of letters in his time and was the direct and acknowledged descendant of Goldsmith, Addison, and Steele. The common advice to young authors, that to write like Lamb is the

road to ruin, proceeds from the same confusion. His quotidian good sense is forgotten in the recollection of his more abstracted musings and his gambols under the moon. But Lamb was a master of many harmonies; and there are occasions when he is content simply to affirm. Let us by all means be wary. But

> I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play

> I am arrived at that point of life, at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving

> I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair

or even, to take a higher tone, such a portrait as that of Coventry on the Temple terrace,

> whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the brow-beater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came . . .

the young writer who sets his cap at these simpler felicities will never be brought by them alone to the infirmary of authors. The finest of all fine things in Lamb, his reverie of Dream-Children,

> Here little Alice spread her hands . . .

is also the simplest of speech. To love Elia it is not necessary to make him queer.

GEORGE GORDON.

August, 1920.

LAMB'S LIFE

1775. Charles Lamb, born at 2 Crown Office Row, Temple, Feb. 10. Household: John ('Lovel') and Elizabeth Lamb, his parents; Aunt 'Hetty' (Sarah Lamb); John Lamb, junior ('James Elia'), aged 11; his sister Mary ('Bridget Elia'), aged 10.

1779. Mary takes Charles into Hertfordshire to visit his great-aunt at Mackery End farm. ('The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End.')

1780. Sees his First Play, at Drury Lane, Dec. 1.

1781. Visits grandmother Field at Blakesware ('Blakesmoor') in Hertfordshire. ('Every plank and pannel of that house for me had magic in it.')

1782. Enters Christ's Hospital, Oct. 9, and meets another new boy, S. T. Coleridge.

1789. Leaves Christ's Hospital, Nov. 23. Resumes play-going.

1790. Employed in the office of Joseph Paice, of Bread Street Hill, merchant. ('I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business—and that is not much—in my composition.')

1791. Enters the Examiner's Office of the South Sea Company (where his brother John worked) at a salary of 10*s.* 6*d.* a week, Sept. 1.

1792. Transfers to the Accountant's Department of the East India House, April 5. Samuel Salt, his father's master, having died, the Lambs prepare to leave the Temple.

1794. Poetical evenings with Coleridge at the Salutation tavern. In love with 'Alice W—' (Ann Simmonds) of Blenheims in Hertfordshire.

1795. Coleridge (aged 23) introduces him to Southey (aged 21), and himself meets Wordsworth (aged 25).

Brief attack of insanity, Dec.-Jan. 1796. ('My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton.')

1796. Coleridge's *Poems*, containing pieces by Lamb (second edition, 1797).

Mary, in a sudden frenzy, kills her mother (Sept. 21) Charles undertakes responsibility for her, and the family move to Pentonville.

1797. Death of Aunt 'Hetty'. Gets Mary 'out into the world again', and spends all his spare time with her.

Visits Coleridge at Nether Stowey and meets the Wordsworths.

1798. *Blank Verse, by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb*, containing 'The Old Familiar Faces', &c.

Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret.

Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* published (Sept.). Lamb much consulted by his friends for his critical judgement.

1799. His father dies (April), and Mary returns to the family.

Revisits Blakesware. Meets Thomas Manning, then 27 ('a man of great Power—an enchanter almost. Only he is lazy . . .'). Practises playwriting.

1800. His friends, and correspondence, increase. Sees much of Coleridge. ('I am living in a continuous feast.')

Moves with Mary from their Pentonville exile to 27 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and decides once for all that there is no place like London.

Pays a two-day visit to Oxford, the sight of the Bodleian Library being 'particularly gratifying' to him.

1801. Visits Manning at Cambridge. Begins correspondence with the Wordsworths. Moves to 16 Mitre Court Buildings, Temple.

1802. Publishes *John Woodvil: a Tragedy* (refused by Kemble) at his own expense.

With Mary visits the Lakes, and in return shows Wordsworth Bartholomew Fair.

1803. Makes the acquaintance of Captain Burney, R.N.—who once made a pun in the Otaheite language and liked Shakespeare because he was 'so much the gentleman'—and of Sarah Burney, his wife ('Sarah Battle'). First doubts of the virtue of tobacco.

1804. Meets Hazlitt (aged 26), who paints his portrait.

1805. De Quincey (aged 20) calls on him.

1806. Manning sails for China. Lamb's farce, *Mr. H.*, damned at Drury Lane (Dec. 10).

The famous Wednesday evenings started (later, Thursdays). ('Like other great men I have a public day, cribbage and pipes.')

1807. *Tales from Shakespeare: Designed for the Use of Young Persons*, in collaboration with Mary. Spends part of his summer holiday in the British Museum, working at his *Dramatic Specimens*.

1808. *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare.* ('The first to draw the Public attention to the Old English Dramatists.') Also, for children, *Adventures of Ulysses*, and (with Mary) *Mrs. Leicester's School.*

1809. Moves to 4 Inner Temple Lane. *Poetry for Children, Entirely Original*, in collaboration with Mary. Visit to the Hazlitts' at Winterslow.

1810. 'Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb.'
Second visit to Winterslow.

1811. Writes some of his best critical essays for Leigh Hunt's *Reflector* ('On Shakespeare's Tragedies', 'On the Genius of Hogarth,' &c.); and prints his celebrated (but unhistorical) 'Farewell to Tobacco'.

1812. Becomes a landed proprietor by the legacy of a cottage and garden in Hertfordshire, originally belonging to godfather Fielde, 'the most gentlemanly of oilmen'.

1813. Writes the Prologue to Coleridge's tragedy, *Remorse*, and the paper 'On Christ's Hospital and the character of the Christ's Hospital Boys' in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The Hazlitts settle in London.

1814. Lamb's parties now once a month: once a week proving too much for Mary. Reviews Wordsworth's *Excursion*, by the poet's request, in the *Quarterly* (Oct.).

1815. His work lightened, and salary doubled, at the East India House.

First meeting with Talfourd, his future biographer (aged 20).

With Mary revisits Mackery End; and pays a flying visit to Cambridge, being driven down 'in great style by Hell Fire Dick' on the Cambridge Coach.

1816. During ten weeks in country lodgings at Dalston Lamb smokes only one pipe.

Coleridge, after many wanderings, returns to London, prints *Christabel*, &c., and settles for life with the Gillmans at Highgate.

Murray the publisher ('whom may God not bless') refuses to undertake a collected edition of Lamb's works.

1817. Hazlitt dedicates his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* to Lamb.

Move from the Temple to 20 Great Russell Street, Covent Garden. Manning returns to England after eleven years in the East.

Lamb meets Keats, and, though technically disqualified

('I have no ear'), regularly attends Novello's musical Sunday evenings.

1818. *The Works of Charles Lamb. In Two Volumes*: with Dedication to Coleridge.

1819. Contributes dramatic criticisms to *The Examiner*. Wordsworth dedicates *The Waggoner* to Lamb.

Proposes marriage to Fanny Kelly, the actress ('What a lass to go a-gypseying through the world with!'), and is refused (July 20).

Visits Cambridge ('I walk *gowned* . . .'), and is visited by William Wordsworth, junior, aged 9.

1820. Sides with Queen Caroline, and writes epigrams against the Regent. At Cambridge once more. Praises Keats's 'Eve of St. Agnes' and 'Isabella'.

First *Elia* essay, 'Recollections of the South Sea House', appears in the *London Magazine* (Aug.).

1821. *Elia* essays continue. Death of his brother John, Oct. 26.

1822. *Elia* essays continue: Lamb 'the hero of the *London Magazine*'.

Visit to Paris, with much rummaging of bookstalls on the quays. Meets Bernard Barton the Quaker poet.

1823. Publication of *Elia. Essays which have appeared under that signature in the London Magazine.*

Move to Colebrooke Cottage, Islington, where he takes to gardening, and 'seldom walks abroad without a bouquet in his buttonhole'. The Lambs adopt Emma Isola, an orphan.

Open *Letter to Southey* (Oct.), who had said of *Elia* in the *Quarterly* that the book wanted only a 'sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original'. Lamb and Southey reconciled (Nov.).

Dines at the Mansion House: 'all from being a writer in a magazine!'

1824. Contributes only two Essays to the *London*.

1825. Leaves East India House 'for ever', after 33 years' service, on a pension of £450 a year (March 29).

Last contribution to *London Magazine* (Aug.).

1826. Contributes to Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*, but decides that he 'can live without the necessity of writing' (Sept.).

Reads in the British Museum. ('It is a sort of Office to me; hours 10 to 4, the same.')

1827. Death of Randall Norris, of the Inner Temple, his father's friend. ('I have no one to call me Charley now.')

Moves from Islington to Enfield Chase (Sept.), and makes many excursions to old scenes in Hertfordshire.

1828. Gratified by the success of the American (pirated) edition of *Elia*. The sale in England disappointing.

1829. The Lambs give up housekeeping, and go into rooms in Enfield (Oct.). Visits to London not what they were: 'all old friends gone'.

1830. *Album Verses, With a Few Others. By Charles Lamb*: Moxon's first publication, and dedicated to him.

Death of Hazlitt in Soho (Sept. 18)—Lamb at his bedside.

1831. Visited by the Wordsworths, and is charged 6*d*. extra by his landlady because 'the elderly gentleman (Wordsworth) had taken such a quantity of sugar in his tea'.

Resumes occasional essay-writing.

1832. Writes obituary of Munden the Comedian (Feb.). Visited by Landor and Christopher North.

1833. *The Last Essays of Elia. Being a Sequel to Essays Published under that Name*: his last book.

Moves to Church Street, Edmonton. Reads Dante and Tasso with Mary, Emma Isola, and a dictionary. Emma married to Moxon (July 30), Lamb giving her away.

1834. Death of Coleridge (July 25), aged 62.

Death of Lamb (Dec. 27), aged 59.

1847. Mary Lamb dies (May 20), aged 82, and is buried beside her brother in Edmonton Churchyard.

HAZLITT ON LAMB

i

A Thursday Evening at the Lambs'

(From the Essay 'On the Conversation of Authors': first published in *The London Magazine*, September, 1820: collected in *The Plain Speaker*, 1826.)

COLERIDGE is the only person who can talk to all sorts of people, on all sorts of subjects, without caring a farthing for their understanding one word he says—and *he* talks only for admiration and to be listened to, and accordingly the least interruption puts him out. I firmly believe he would make just the same impression on half his audiences, if he purposely repeated absolute nonsense with the same voice and manner and inexhaustible flow of undulating speech! In general, wit shines only by reflection. You must take your cue from your company—must rise as they rise, and sink as they fall. You must see that your good things, your knowing allusions, are not flung away, like the pearls in the adage. What a check it is to be asked a foolish question; to find that the first principles are not understood! You are thrown on your back immediately, the conversation is stopped like a country-dance by those who do not know the figure. But when a set of adepts, of *illuminati*, get about a question, it is worth while to hear them talk. They may snarl and quarrel over it, like dogs; but they pick it bare to the bone, they masticate it thoroughly.

This was the case formerly at Lamb's, where we used to have many lively skirmishes at their Thursday evening parties. I doubt whether the Small-coal man's musical

parties could exceed them. Oh! for the pen of John Buncle to consecrate a *petit souvenir* to their memory!—There was Lamb himself, the most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men. He always made the best pun, and the best remark in the course of the evening. His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine piquant, deep, eloquent things in half a dozen half-sentences as he does. His jests scald like tears: and he probes a question with a play upon words. What a keen, laughing, hare-brained vein of home-felt truth! What choice venom! How often did we cut into the haunch of letters, while we discussed the haunch of mutton on the table! How we skimmed the cream of criticism! How we got into the heart of controversy! How we picked out the marrow of authors! 'And, in our flowing cups, many a good name and true was freshly remembered.' Recollect (most sage and critical reader) that in all this I was but a guest! Need I go over the names? They were but the old everlasting set—Milton and Shakspeare, Pope and Dryden, Steele and Addison, Swift and Gay, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Richardson, Hogarth's prints, Claude's landscapes, the Cartoons at Hampton Court, and all those things that, having once been, must ever be. The Scotch Novels had not then been heard of: so we said nothing about them. In general, we were hard upon the moderns. The author of the *Rambler* was only tolerated in Boswell's *Life* of him; and it was as much as any one could do to edge in a word for Junius. Lamb could not bear *Gil Blas*. This was a fault. I remember the greatest triumph I ever had was in persuading him, after some years' difficulty, that Fielding was better than Smollett. On one occasion he was for making out a list of persons famous in history that one would wish to see again—at the head of whom were Pontius Pilate, Sir Thomas Browne, and Dr. Faustus—but we blackballed

most of his list! But with what a gusto would he describe his favourite authors, Donne or Sir Philip Sidney, and call their most crabbed passages *delicious!* He tried them on his palate as epicures taste olives, and his observations had a smack in them, like a roughness on the tongue. With what discrimination he hinted a defect in what he admired most!—as in saying that the display of the sumptuous banquet in *Paradise Regained* was not in true keeping, as the simplest fare was all that was necessary to tempt the extremity of hunger—and stating that Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* were too much like married people. He has furnished many a text for Coleridge to preach upon. There was no fuss or cant about him: nor were his sweets or his sours ever diluted with one particle of affectation. I cannot say that the party at Lamb's were all of one description. There were honorary members, lay-brothers. Wit and good-fellowship was the motto inscribed over the door. When a stranger came in, it was not asked, 'Has he written anything?'—we were above that pedantry; but we waited to see what he could do. If he could take a hand at piquet, he was welcome to sit down. If a person liked anything, if he took snuff heartily, it was sufficient. He would understand, by analogy, the pungency of other things besides Irish blackguard or Scotch rappee. A character was good anywhere, in a room or on paper. But we abhorred insipidity, affectation, and fine gentlemen. There was one of our party who never failed to mark 'two for his Nob' at cribbage, and he was thought no mean person. This was Ned Phillips, and a better fellow in his way breathes not. There was ——, who asserted some incredible matter of fact as a likely paradox, and settled all controversies by an *ipse dixit*, a *fiat* of his will, hammering out many a hard theory on the anvil of his brain—the Baron Munchausen of politics and practical philosophy:—there was Captain Burney, who had you at an advantage by never under-

standing you:—there was Jem White, the author of *Falstaff's Letters*, who the other day left this dull world to go in search of more kindred spirits, 'turning like the latter end of a lover's lute:'—there was Ayrton, who sometimes dropped in, the Will Honeycomb of our set—and Mrs. Reynolds, who, being of a quiet turn, loved to hear a noisy debate. An utterly uninformed person might have supposed this a scene of vulgar confusion and uproar. While the most critical question was pending, while the most difficult problem in philosophy was solving, Phillips cried out, 'That's game,' and Martin Burney muttered a quotation over the last remains of a veal-pie at a side-table. Once, and once only, the literary interest overcame the general. For Coleridge was riding the high German horse, and demonstrating the Categories of the Transcendental Philosophy to the author of the *Road to Ruin*; who insisted on his knowledge of German, and German metaphysics, having read the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the original. 'My dear Mr. Holcroft,' said Coleridge, in a tone of infinitely provoking conciliation, 'you really put me in mind of a sweet pretty, German girl, about fifteen, that I met with in the Hartz forest in Germany—and who one day, as I was reading the *Limits of the Knowable and the Unknowable*, the profoundest of all his works, with great attention, came behind my chair, and leaning over, said, "What! *you* read Kant? Why, *I*, that am a German born, don't understand him!"' This was too much to bear, and Holcroft, starting up, called out in no measured tone, 'Mr. Coleridge, you are the most eloquent man I ever met with, and the most troublesome with your eloquence!' Phillips held the cribbage-peg, that was to mark him game, suspended in his hand; and the whist-table was silent for a moment. I saw Holcroft downstairs, and on coming to the landing-place at Mitre Court, he stopped me to observe, that 'he thought Mr. Coleridge a very clever man, with a great command of language, but

that he feared he did not always affix very precise ideas to the words he used.' After he was gone we had our laugh out, and went on with the argument on the nature of Reason, the Imagination, and the Will. I wish I could find a publisher for it ; it would make a supplement to the *Biographia Literaria*, in a volume and a half octavo.

Those days are over ! An event, the name of which I wish never to mention, broke up our party, like a bombshell thrown into the room ; and now we seldom meet :

Like angels' visits, short and far between.

There is no longer the same set of persons, nor of associations. Lamb does not live where he did. By shifting his abode, his notions seem less fixed. He does not wear his old snuff-coloured coat and breeches. It looks like an alteration in his style. An author and a wit should have a separate costume, a particular cloth ; he should present something positive and singular to the mind, like Mr. Douce of the Museum. Our faith in the religion of letters will not bear to be taken to pieces, and put together again by caprice or accident. Leigh Hunt goes there sometimes. He has a fine vinous spirit about him, and tropical blood in his veins ; but he is better at his own table. He has a great flow of pleasantry and delightful animal spirits ; but his hits do not tell like Lamb's ; you cannot repeat them the next day.

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Another Thursday Evening

(From the Essay 'Of Persons One would wish to have seen' : first published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, January, 1826 ; republished in *Literary Remains*, 1836, and *Winterslow*, 1850.)

On the question being started, Ayrton said, 'I suppose the two first persons you would choose to see would be the two greatest names in English literature, Sir Isaac Newton

and Mr. Locke ? ' In this Ayrton, as usual, reckoned without his host. Every one burst out a laughing at the expression of Lamb's face, in which impatience was restrained by courtesy. 'Yes, the greatest names,' he stammered out hastily, 'but they were not persons—not persons.'—'Not persons ? ' said Ayrton, looking wise and foolish at the same time, afraid his triumph might be premature. 'That is,' rejoined Lamb, 'not characters, you know. By Mr. Locke and Sir Isaac Newton, you mean the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and the *Principia*, which we have to this day. Beyond their contents there is nothing personally interesting in the men. But what we want to see any one *bodily* for, is when there is something peculiar, striking in the individuals, more than we can learn from their writings, and yet are curious to know. I dare say Locke and Newton were very like Kneller's portraits of them. But who could paint Shakspeare ? '—' Ay,' retorted Ayrton, 'there it is ; then I suppose you would prefer seeing him and Milton instead ? ' —' No,' said Lamb, 'neither. I have seen so much of Shakspeare on the stage and on bookstalls, in frontispieces and on mantel-pieces, that I am quite tired of the everlasting repetition : and as to Milton's face, the impressions that have come down to us of it I do not like ; it is too starched and puritanical ; and I should be afraid of losing some of the manna of his poetry in the leaven of his countenance and the precisian's band and gown.'—' I shall guess no more,' said Ayrton. 'Who is it, then, you would like to see "in his habit as he lived," if you had your choice of the whole range of English literature ? ' Lamb then named Sir Thomas Browne and Fulke Greville, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, as the two worthies whom he should feel the greatest pleasure to encounter on the floor of his apartment in their nightgown and slippers, and to exchange friendly greetings with them. At this Ayrton laughed outright, and conceived Lamb was jesting with him ; but as no one followed his example, he

thought there might be something in it, and waited for an explanation in a state of whimsical suspense. Lamb then (as well as I can remember a conversation that passed twenty years ago—how time slips!) went on as follows. 'The reason why I pitch upon these two authors is, that their writings are riddles, and they themselves the most mysterious of personages. They resemble the soothsayers of old, who dealt in dark hints and doubtful oracles; and I should like to ask them the meaning of what no mortal but themselves, I should suppose, can fathom. There is Dr. Johnson: I have no curiosity, no strange uncertainty about him; he and Boswell together have pretty well let me into the secret of what passed through his mind. He and other writers like him are sufficiently explicit: my friends whose repose I should be tempted to disturb (were it in my power), are implicit, inextricable, inscrutable.

'When I look at that obscure but gorgeous prose composition the *Urn-burial*, I seem to myself to look into a deep abyss, at the bottom of which are hid pearls and rich treasure; or it is like a stately labyrinth of doubt and withering speculation, and I would invoke the spirit of the author to lead me through it. Besides, who would not be curious to see the lineaments of a man who, having himself been twice married, wished that mankind were propagated like trees! As to Fulke Greville, he is like nothing but one of his own "Prologues spoken by the ghost of an old king of Ormus," a truly formidable and inviting personage: his style is apocalyptical, cabalistical, a knot worthy of such an apparition to unite; and for the unravelling a passage or two, I would stand the brunt of an encounter with so portentous a commentator!'—'I am afraid, in that case,' said Ayrton, 'that if the mystery were once cleared up, the merit might be lost'; and turning to me, whispered a friendly apprehension, that while Lamb continued to admire these old crabbed authors, he would never become a popular writer. Dr. Donne

was mentioned as a writer of the same period, with a very interesting countenance, whose history was singular, and whose meaning was often quite as *uncomeatable*, without a personal citation from the dead, as that of any of his contemporaries. The volume was produced; and while some one was expatiating on the exquisite simplicity and beauty of the portrait prefixed to the old edition, Ayrton got hold of the poetry, and exclaiming 'What have we here?' read the following:

Here lies a She-Sun and a He-Moon there—
She gives the best light to his sphear,
Or each is both, and all, and so
They unto one another nothing owe.

There was no resisting this, till Lamb, seizing the volume, turned to the beautiful *Lines to his Mistress*, dissuading her from accompanying him abroad, and read them with suffused features and a faltering tongue. . . .

'I should like,' said Mrs. Reynolds, 'to have seen Pope talk with Patty Blount; and I *have* seen Goldsmith.' Every one turned round to look at Mrs. Reynolds, as if by so doing they could get a sight at Goldsmith. . . .

'I thought,' said Ayrton, turning short round upon Lamb, 'that you of the Lake School did not like Pope?'—'Not like Pope! My dear sir, you must be under a mistake—I can read him over and over for ever!'—'Why, certainly, the *Essay on Man* must be allowed to be a masterpiece.'—'It may be so, but I seldom look into it.'—'Oh! then it 's his Satires you admire?'—'No, not his Satires, but his friendly Epistles and his compliments.'—'Compliments! I did not know he ever made any.'—'The finest,' said Lamb, 'that were ever paid by the wit of man. Each of them is worth an estate for life—nay, is an immortality. There is that superb one to Lord Cornbury:

Despise low joys, low gains;
Disdain whatever Cornbury disdains;
Be virtuous, and be happy for your pains.

Was there ever more artful insinuation of idolatrous praise? And then that noble apotheosis of his friend Lord Mansfield (however little deserved), when, speaking of the House of Lords, he adds:

Conspicuous scene! another yet is nigh,
(More silent far) where kings and poets lie;
Where Murray (long enough his country's pride)
Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde.

And with what a fine turn of indignant flattery he addresses Lord Bolingbroke:

Why rail they then, if but one wreath of mine,
Oh! all-accomplish'd St. John, deck thy shrine?

Or turn,' continued Lamb, with a slight hectic on his cheek and his eye glistening, 'to his list of early friends:

But why then publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
And Congreve loved, and Swift endured my lays:
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the head;
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
Received with open arms one poet more.
Happy my studies, if by these approved!
Happier their author, if by these beloved!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.'

Here his voice totally failed him, and throwing down the book, he said, 'Do you think I would not wish to have been friends with such a man as this?'

'What say you to Dryden?'—'He rather made a show of himself, and courted popularity in that lowest temple of fame, a coffee-shop, so as in some measure to vulgarise one's idea of him. Pope, on the contrary, reached the very *beau ideal* of what a poet's life should be; and his fame while living seemed to be an emanation from that which was to circle his name after death. He was so far enviable (and one

would feel proud to have witnessed the rare spectacle in him) that he was almost the only poet and man of genius who met with his reward, on this side of the tomb, who realised in friends, fortune, the esteem of the world, the most sanguine hopes of a youthful ambition, and who found that sort of patronage from the great during his lifetime which they would be thought anxious to bestow upon him after his death. Read Gay's verses to him on his supposed return from Greece, after his translation of Homer was finished, and say if you would not gladly join the bright procession that welcomed him home, or see it once more land at Whitehall stairs.'—'Still,' said Mrs. Reynolds, 'I would rather have seen him talking with Patty Blount, or riding by in a coronet-coach with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu!'

Erasmus Phillips, who was deep in a game of piquet at the other end of the room, whispered to Martin Burney to ask if Junius would not be a fit person to invoke from the dead. 'Yes,' said Lamb, 'provided he would agree to lay aside his mask.'

We were now at a stand for a short time, when Fielding was mentioned as a candidate; only one, however, seconded the proposition. 'Richardson?'—'By all means, but only to look at him through the glass door of his back shop, hard at work upon one of his novels (the most extraordinary contrast that ever was presented between an author and his works); not to let him come behind his counter, lest he should want you to turn customer, or to go upstairs with him, lest he should offer to read the first manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison, which was originally written in eight-and-twenty volumes octavo, or get out the letters of his female correspondents, to prove that Joseph Andrews was low.'

There was but one statesman in the whole of English history that any one expressed the least desire to see—

Oliver Cromwell, with his fine, frank, rough, pimply face, and wily policy; and one enthusiast, John Bunyan, the immortal author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It seemed that if he came into the room, dreams would follow him, and that each person would nod under his golden cloud, 'nigh-sphered in heaven,' a canopy as strange and stately as any in Homer.

Of all persons near our own time, Garrick's name was received with the greatest enthusiasm, who was proposed by Barron Field. He presently superseded both Hogarth and Handel, who had been talked of, but then it was on condition that he should act in tragedy and comedy, in the play and the farce, *Lear* and *Wildair* and *Abel Drugger*. What a *sight for sore eyes* that would be! Who would not part with a year's income at least, almost with a year of his natural life, to be present at it? . . .

We were interrupted in the hey-day and mid-career of this fanciful speculation, by a grumbler in a corner, who declared it was a shame to make all this rout about a mere player and farce-writer, to the neglect and exclusion of the fine old dramatists, the contemporaries and rivals of Shakspeare. Lamb said he had anticipated this objection when he had named the author of *Mustapha* and *Alaham*; and, out of caprice, insisted upon keeping him to represent the set, in preference to the wild, hare-brained enthusiast, Kit Marlowe; to the sexton of St. Ann's, Webster, with his melancholy yew-trees and death's-heads; to Decker, who was but a garrulous proser; to the voluminous Heywood; and even to Beaumont and Fletcher, whom we might offend by complimenting the wrong author on their joint productions. Lord Brooke, on the contrary, stood quite by himself, or, in Cowley's words, was 'a vast species alone.' Some one hinted at the circumstance of his being a lord, which rather startled Lamb, but he said a *ghost* would perhaps dispense with strict etiquette, on being regularly addressed by his

title. Ben Jonson divided our suffrages pretty equally. Some were afraid he would begin to traduce Shakspeare, who was not present to defend himself. 'If he grows disagreeable,' it was whispered aloud, 'there is Godwin can match him.' At length, his romantic visit to Drummond of Hawthornden was mentioned, and turned the scale in his favour.

Lamb inquired if there was any one that was hanged that I would choose to mention? And I answered, Eugene Aram. The name of the 'Admirable Crichton' was suddenly started as a splendid example of *waste* talents, so different from the generality of his countrymen. This choice was mightily approved by a North-Briton present, who declared himself descended from that prodigy of learning and accomplishment, and said he had family plate in his possession as vouchers for the fact, with the initials A. C.—*Admirable Crichton!* Hunt laughed, or rather roared, as heartily at this as I should think he has done for many years. . . .

By this time it should seem that some rumour of our whimsical deliberation had got wind, and had disturbed the *irritable genus* in their shadowy abodes, for we received messages from several candidates that we had just been thinking of. Gray declined our invitation, though he had not yet been asked: Gay offered to come, and bring in his hand the Duchess of Bolton, the original Polly: Steele and Addison left their cards as Captain Sentry and Sir Roger de Coverley: Swift came in and sat down without speaking a word, and quitted the room as abruptly: Otway and Chatterton were seen lingering on the opposite side of the Styx, but could not muster enough between them to pay Charon his fare: Thomson fell asleep in the boat, and was rowed back again; and Burns sent a low fellow, one John Barleycorn, an old companion of his, who had conducted him to the other world, to say that he had during his lifetime

been drawn out of his retirement as a show, only to be made an excise-man of, and that he would rather remain where he was. He desired, however, to shake hands by his representative—the hand, thus held out, was in a burning fever, and shook prodigiously.

The room was hung round with several portraits of eminent painters. While we were debating whether we should demand speech with these masters of mute eloquence whose features were so familiar to us, it seemed that all at once they glided from their frames, and seated themselves at some little distance from us. There was Leonardo, with his majestic beard and watchful eye, having a bust of Archimedes before him; next him was Raphael's graceful head turned round to the Fornarina; and on his other side was Lucretia Borgia, with calm, golden locks; Michael Angelo had placed the model of St. Peter's on the table before him; Correggio had an angel at his side; Titian was seated with his mistress between himself and Giorgione; Guido was accompanied by his own Aurora, who took a dice-box from him; Claude held a mirror in his hand; Rubens patted a beautiful panther (led in by a satyr) on the head; Vandyk appeared as his own Paris, and Rembrandt was hid under furs, gold chains, and jewels, which Sir Joshua eyed closely, holding his hand so as to shade his forehead. Not a word was spoken; and as we rose to do them homage, they still presented the same surface to the view. Not being *bonâ-fide* representations of living people, we got rid of the splendid apparitions by signs and dumb show. As soon as they had melted into thin air, there was a loud noise at the outer door, and we found it was Giotto, Cimabue, and Ghirlandaio, who had been raised from the dead by their earnest desire to see their illustrious successors—

Whose names on earth
In Fame's eternal records live for aye!

Finding them gone, they had no ambition to be seen after

them, and mournfully withdrew. 'Egad!' said Lamb, 'these are the very fellows I should like to have had some talk with, to know how they could see to paint when all was dark around them.'

'But shall we have nothing to say,' interrogated G. J—— 'to the *Legend of Good Women*?'—'Name, name, Mr. J——,' cried Hunt in a boisterous tone of friendly exultation, 'name as many as you please, without reserve or fear of molestation!' J—— was perplexed between so many amiable recollections, that the name of the lady of his choice expired in a pensive whiff of his pipe; and Lamb impatiently declared for the Duchess of Newcastle. Mrs. Hutchinson was no sooner mentioned, than she carried the day from the Duchess. We were the less solicitous on this subject of filling up the posthumous lists of Good Women, as there was already one in the room as good, as sensible, and in all respects as exemplary, as the best of them could be for their lives! 'I should like vastly to have seen Ninon de l'Enclos,' said that incomparable person; and this immediately put us in mind that we had neglected to pay honour due to our friends on the other side of the Channel: Voltaire, the patriarch of levity, and Rousseau, the father of sentiment; Montaigne and Rabelais (great in wisdom and in wit); Molière and that illustrious group that are collected round him (in the print of that subject) to hear him read his comedy of the *Tartuffe* at the house of Ninon; Racine, La Fontaine, Rochefoucalt, St. Evremont, etc.

'There is one person,' said a shrill, querulous voice, 'I would rather see than all these—Don Quixote!'

'Come, come!' said Hunt; 'I thought we should have no heroes, real or fabulous. What say you, Mr. Lamb? Are you for eking out your shadowy list with such names as Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Tamerlane, or Ghengis Khan?'—'Excuse me,' said Lamb; 'on the subject of characters in active life, plotters and disturbers of the world, I have

have been, in a manner, forcing myself upon his hospitalities and at a moment when he might have confidential friends about him ; besides that, he was sometimes tempted away to the theatres. I went, therefore, to the India House ; made inquiries amongst the servants ; and, after some trouble (for *that* was early in his Leadenhall Street career, and possibly he was not much known), I was shown into a small room, or else a small section of a large one (thirty-four years affects one's remembrance of some circumstances) in which was a very lofty writing-desk, separated by a still higher railing from that part of the floor on which the profane—the laity, like myself—were allowed to approach the *clerus*, or clerkly rulers of the room. Within the railing sat, to the best of my remembrance, six quill-driving gentlemen ; not gentlemen whose duty or profession it was merely to drive the quill, but who were then driving it —*gens de plume*, such *in esse*, as well as *in posse*—in act as well as habit ; for, as if they supposed me a spy sent by some superior power to report upon the situation of affairs as surprised by me, they were all too profoundly immersed in their oriental studies to have any sense of my presence. Consequently, I was reduced to a necessity of announcing myself and my errand. I walked, therefore, into one of the two open doorways of the railing, and stood closely by the high stool of him who occupied the first place within the little aisle. I touched his arm, by way of recalling him from his lofty Leadenhall speculations to this sublunary world ; and, presenting my letter, asked if that gentleman (pointing to the address) were really a citizen of the present room ; for I had been repeatedly misled, by the directions given me, into wrong rooms. The gentleman smiled ; it was a smile not to be forgotten. This was Lamb. . . .

The letter of introduction, containing (I imagine) no matters of business, was speedily run through ; and I instantly received an invitation to spend the evening with

him. Lamb was not one of those who catch at the chance of escaping from a bore by fixing some distant day, when accidents (in duplicate proportion, perhaps, to the number of intervening days) may have carried you away from the place: he sought to benefit by no luck of that kind; for he was, with his limited income—and I say it deliberately—positively the most hospitable man I have known in this world. That night, the same night, I was to come and spend the evening with him. I had gone to the India House with the express purpose of accepting whatever invitation he should give me; and, therefore, I accepted this, took my leave, and left Lamb in the act of resuming his aerial position.

I was to come so early as to drink tea with Lamb; and the hour was seven. He lived in the Temple; and I, who was not then, as afterwards I became, a student and member of 'the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple,' did not know much of the localities. However, I found out his abode, not greatly beyond my time: nobody had been asked to meet me,—which a little surprised me, but I was glad of it; for, besides Lamb, there was present his sister, Miss Lamb, of whom, and whose talents and sweetness of disposition, I had heard. I turned the conversation, upon the first opening which offered, to the subject of Coleridge; and many of my questions were answered satisfactorily, because seriously, by Miss Lamb. But Lamb took a pleasure in baffling me, or in throwing ridicule upon the subject. Out of this grew the matter of our affray. We were speaking of *The Ancient Mariner*. Now to explain what followed, and a little to excuse myself, I must beg the reader to understand that I was under twenty years of age, and that my admiration for Coleridge (as, in perhaps a still greater degree, for Wordsworth) was literally in no respect short of a religious feeling: it had, indeed, all the sanctity of religion, and all the tenderness of a human

veneration. Then, also, to imagine the strength which it would derive from circumstances that do not exist now, but did then, let the reader further suppose a case—not such as he may have known since that era about Sir Walter Scotts and Lord Byrons, when every man you could possibly fall foul of, early or late, night or day, summer or winter, was in perfect readiness to feel and express his sympathy with the admirer—but when no man, beyond one or two in each ten thousand, had so much as heard of either Coleridge or Wordsworth, and that one, or those two, knew them only to scorn them, trample on them, spit upon them: men so abject in public estimation, I maintain, as that Coleridge and that Wordsworth, had not existed before, have not existed since, will not exist again. We have heard in old times of donkeys insulting effete or dying lions by kicking them; but in the case of Coleridge and Wordsworth it was effete donkeys that kicked living lions. They, Coleridge and Wordsworth, were the Pariahs of literature in those days: as much scorned wherever they were known; but escaping that scorn only because they were as little known as Pariahs, and even more obscure.

Well, after this bravura, by way of conveying my sense of the real position then occupied by these two authors—a position which thirty and odd years have altered, by a revolution more astonishing and total than ever before happened in literature or in life—let the reader figure to himself the sensitive horror with which a young person, carrying his devotion about with him, of necessity, as the profoundest of secrets, like a primitive Christian amongst a nation of Pagans, or a Roman Catholic convert amongst the bloody idolaters of Japan—in Oxford, above all places, hoping for no sympathy, and feeling a daily grief, almost a shame, in harbouring this devotion to that which, nevertheless, had done more for the expansion and sustenance of his own inner mind than all literature besides—let the reader figure,

I say, to himself, the shock with which such a person must recoil from hearing the very friend and associate of these authors utter what seemed at that time a burning ridicule of all which belonged to them—their books, their thoughts, their places, their persons. This had gone on for some time before we came upon the ground of *The Ancient Mariner*; I had been grieved, perplexed, astonished; and how else could I have felt reasonably, knowing nothing of Lamb's propensity to mystify a stranger; he, on the other hand, knowing nothing of the depth of my feelings on these subjects, and that they were not so much mere literary preferences as something that went deeper than life or household affections? At length, when he had given utterance to some ferocious canon of judgment, which seemed to question the entire value of the poem, I said, perspiring (I dare say) in this detestable crisis—'But, Mr. Lamb, good heavens! how is it possible you can allow yourself in such opinions? What instance could you bring from the poem that would bear you out in these insinuations?' 'Instances!' said Lamb: 'oh, I'll instance you, if you come to that. Instance, indeed! Pray, what do you say to this—

The many men so beautiful,
And they all dead did lie?

So beautiful, indeed! Beautiful! Just think of such a gang of Wapping vagabonds, all covered with pitch, and chewing tobacco; and the old gentleman himself—what do you call him?—the bright-eyed fellow?' What more might follow I never heard; for, at this point, in a perfect rapture of horror, I raised my hands—both hands—to both ears; and, without stopping to think or to apologize, I endeavoured to restore equanimity to my disturbed sensibilities by shutting out all further knowledge of Lamb's impieties. At length he seemed to have finished; so I, on my part, thought I might venture to take off the embargo: and in fact he *had* ceased; but no sooner did he find me restored

to my hearing than he said with a most sarcastic smile—which he could assume upon occasion—'If you please, sir, we'll say grace before we begin.' I know not whether Lamb were really piqued or not at the mode by which I had expressed my disturbance: Miss Lamb certainly was not; her goodness led her to pardon me, and to treat me—in whatever light she might really view my almost involuntary rudeness—as the party who had suffered wrong; and, for the rest of the evening, she was so pointedly kind and conciliatory in her manner that I felt greatly ashamed of my boyish failure in self-command. Yet, after all, Lamb necessarily appeared so much worse, in my eyes, as a traitor is worse than an open enemy.

Lamb, after this one visit—not knowing at that time any particular reason for continuing to seek his acquaintance—I did not trouble with my calls for some years. At length, however, about the year 1808, and for the six or seven following years, in my evening visits to Coleridge, I used to meet him again; not often, but sufficiently to correct altogether the very false impression I had received of his character and manners. . . .

There was a notion prevalent about Lamb, which I can affirm to have been a most erroneous one: it was—that any flagrant act of wickedness formed a recommendation to his favour. 'Ah!' said one man to me, when asking a letter of introduction from him—'ah! that I could but recommend you as a man that had robbed the mail, or the King's exchequer—which would be better. In that case, I need not add a word; you would take rank instantly amongst the privileged friends of Lamb, without a word from me.' Now, as to '*the King's Exchequer*,' I cannot say. A man who should have placed himself in relation with Falstaff by obeying his commands [1] at a distance of four centuries (like the traveller who demanded of the turnpikeman—'How do you

[1] 'Rob me thy father's exchequer'—*Falstaff, in Henry IV, Part 1st.*

like your eggs dressed? ' and, ten years after, on passing the same gate, received the monosyllabic reply—*poached*), that man might have presented irresistible claims to Lamb's affection. Shakspere, or any thing connected with Shakspere, might have proved too much for his Roman virtue. But, putting aside any case so impossible as this, I can affirm that—so far from this being the truth, or approaching the truth—a rule the very opposite governed Lamb's conduct. So far from welcoming wicked, profligate, or dissolute people by preference, if they happened to be clever—he bore with numerous dull people, stupid people, asinine people, for no other reason upon earth than because he knew them, or believed them, to have been ill-used or oppressed by some clever but dissolute man. That was enough. Sufficient it was that they had been the objects of injustice, calumny, persecution, or wrong in any shape—and, without further question, they had 'their place allowed' at Lamb's fireside. I knew some eminent instances of what I am now saying. And I used to think to myself, Were this feature of Lamb's character made known, and the natural results followed, what would he do? Refuse anybody, reject anybody, tell him to begone, he could not, no more than he could have danced upon his mother's grave. He would have received all who presented themselves with any rational pretensions, and would finally have gone to prison rather than reject anybody. I do not say this rhetorically. I knew Lamb; and I know certain cases in which he was concerned—cases which it is difficult to publish with any regard to the feelings of persons now living, but which (if published in all their circumstances) would show him to be the very noblest of human beings. He was a man, in a sense more eminent than would be conceivable by many people, *princely*—nothing short of that—in his beneficence. Many liberal people I have known in this world—many who were charitable in the widest sense—many munificent

people; but never any one upon whom, for bounty, for indulgence and forgiveness, for charitable construction of doubtful or mixed actions, and for regal munificence, you might have thrown yourself with so absolute a reliance as upon this comparatively poor Charles Lamb. Considered as a man of genius, he was not in the very first rank, simply because his range was a contracted one: within that range, he was perfect; of the peculiar powers which he possessed he has left to the world as exquisite a specimen as this planet is likely to exhibit. But, as a *moral* being, in the total compass of his relations to this world's duties, in the largeness and diffusiveness of his charity, in the graciousness of his condescension to inferior intellects, I am disposed, after a deliberate review of my own entire experience, to pronounce him the best man, the nearest in his approaches to an ideal standard of excellence, that I have known or read of. In the mingled purity—a childlike purity—and the benignity of his nature, I again express my own deep feeling of the truth, when I say that he recalled to my mind the image and character of St. John the Evangelist—of him who was at once the beloved apostle, and also, more peculiarly, the apostle of love. Well and truly, therefore, did the poet say, in his beautiful lines upon this man's grave and memory—

> Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived! . . .

Somewhere in this period it was, by the way, that I had an opportunity of introducing to his knowledge my brother, 'poor Pink.' Lamb liked him; and the more so from an accident which occurred at the very second interview that he and Pink ever had. It was in Bond Street, at an exhibition of two large and splendid pictures by Salvator Rosa,—one representing a forest scene and a forest recluse (of what character in Salvator's intention may be doubted, but in the little printed account of the paintings he was described as Diogenes). These pictures were, I should think, twelve

feet high at the least, consequently upon a large scale; and the tone of colouring was peculiarly sombre, or rather cold; and it tended even to the monotonous. One almost uniform cheerless tint of yellowish green, with some little perhaps of a warmish umber, over-spread the distances; and the foreground showed little else than a heavy dull-toned black. Pink, who knew as little of painting as the *bow'sons* of his various ships, had, however, a profound sensibility to some of its effects; and, if he ever ran up hastily and fearfully to London from Portsmouth, it was sure to be at the time when the annual exhibition of the Academy was open. No exhibition was ever missed by him, whether of a public or comparatively private nature. In particular, he had attended, with infinite delight, the exhibition (in Newman Street, I think) of Mr. West's pictures. *Death and his Pale Horse* prodigiously attracted him; and others, from the freshness and gorgeousness of their colouring, had absolutely fascinated his eye. It may be imagined, therefore, with what disgust he viewed two subjects, from which the vast name of the painter had led him to expect so much, but which from the low style of the colouring yielded him so little. There might be forty people in the room at the time my brother and I were there. We had stood for ten or fifteen minutes, examining the pictures, when at length I noticed Charles Lamb, and, at a little distance, his sister. If a creditor had wished to seize upon either, no surer place in London (no, not Drury Lane, or Covent Garden) for finding them than an exhibition from the works of the old masters. And, moreover, as, amongst certain classes of birds, if you have one you are sure of the other, so, with respect to the Lambs (unless in those dreary seasons when the '*dual* unity,' as it is most affectingly termed by Wordsworth, had been for a time sundered into a widowed desolation by the periodic affliction), seeing or hearing the brother, you knew that the sister could not be

far off. If she *were*, you sighed, knew what that meant, and asked no questions.

Lamb, upon seeing us, advanced to shake hands; but he paused one moment to await the critical dogma which he perceived to be at that time issuing from Pink's lips. That it was vituperation in a high degree, anybody near us might hear; and some actually turned round in fright upon catching these profane words:—'D—— the fellow! I could do better myself.' Wherewith, perhaps unconsciously, but perhaps also by way of enforcing his thought, Pink (who had brought home from his long sea life a detestable practice of chewing tobacco) ejaculated a quid of some coarse quality, that lighted upon the frame of the great master's picture, and, for aught I know, may be sticking there yet. Lamb could not have approved such a judgment, nor perhaps the immeasurable presumption that might seem to have accompanied such a judgment from most men, or from an artist; but he knew that Pink was a mere sailor, knowing nothing historically of art, nor much of the pretensions of the mighty artists. Or, had it been otherwise, at all events, he admired and loved, beyond all other qualities whatsoever, a hearty, cordial sincerity. Honest homely obstinacy, not to be enslaved by a great name—though that, again, may, by possibility, become in process of time itself an affectation—Lamb almost reverenced; and therefore it need not surprise anybody that, in the midst of his loud, unrepressed laughter, he came up to my brother, and offered his hand, with an air of friendliness that flattered Pink, and a little misled him: for, that evening, on dining with Pink, he said to me—'That Lamb 's a sensible fellow. You see how evidently he approved of what I remarked about that old humbugging rascal, Salvator Rosa.' Lamb, in this point, had a feature of character in common with Sir Walter Scott (at least I suppose it to have been a feature of Sir Walter's mind, upon the information of Professor Wilson): that, if a man had, or

if he supposed him to have, a strongly marked combination or tendency of feelings, of opinions, of likings, or of dislikings—what in fact, we call a *character*—no matter whether it were built upon prejudices the most extravagant, or ignorance the most profound, provided only it were sincere, and not mere lawless audacity, but were self-consistent, and had *unity* as respected itself—in that extent he was sure to manifest liking and respect for the man. And hence it was that Lamb liked Pink much more for this Gothic and outrageous sentence upon Salvator Rosa than he would have liked him for the very best, profoundest, or most comprehensive critique upon that artist that could have been delivered. Pink, on the other hand, liked Lamb greatly, and used, in all his letters, to request that I would present his best regards to that Charles Lamb, 'who wouldn't be humbugged by the old rascal in Bond Street.'

From the Essay on Lamb

(First published in the *North British Review*, November, 1848; reprinted in the author's collected edition, 1858.)

It seems little to be perceived how much the great scriptural idea of the *worldly* and the *unworldly* is found to emerge in literature as well as in life. In reality, the very same combinations of moral qualities, infinitely varied, which compose the harsh physiognomy of what we call worldliness in the living groups of life, must unavoidably present themselves in books. A library divides into sections of worldly and unworldly, even as a crowd of men divides into that same majority and minority. The world has an instinct for recognising its own, and recoils from certain qualities when exemplified in books, with the same disgust or defective sympathy as would have governed it in real life. From

qualities, for instance, of child-like simplicity, of shy profundity, or of inspired self-communion, the world does and must turn away its face towards grosser, bolder, more determined, or more intelligible expressions of character and intellect ; and not otherwise in literature, nor at all less in literature, than it does in the realities of life.

Charles Lamb, if any ever *was*, is amongst the class here contemplated ; he, if any ever *has*, ranks amongst writers whose works are destined to be for ever unpopular, and yet for ever interesting ; interesting, moreover, by means of those very qualities which guarantee their non-popularity. The same qualities which will be found forbidding to the world and the thoughtless, which will be found insipid to many even amongst robust and powerful minds, are exactly those which will continue to command a select audience in every generation. The prose essays, under the signature of *Elia*, form the most delightful section amongst Lamb's works. They traverse a peculiar field of observation, sequestered from general interest ; and they are composed in a spirit too delicate and unobtrusive to catch the ear of the noisy crowd, clamouring for strong sensations. But this retiring delicacy itself, the pensiveness chequered by gleams of the fanciful, and the humour that is touched with cross lights of pathos, together with the picturesque quaintness of the objects casually described, whether men, or things, or usages, and, in the rear of all this, the constant recurrence to ancient recollections and to decaying forms of household life, as things retiring before the tumult of new and revolutionary generations,—these traits in combination communicate to the papers a grace and strength of originality which nothing in any literature approaches, whether for degree or kind of excellence, except the most felicitous papers of Addison, such as those on Sir Roger de Coverley, and some others in the same vein of composition. They resemble Addison's papers also in the diction ; which is natural and

idiomatic, even to carelessness. They are equally faithful to the truth of nature: and in this only they differ remarkably—that the sketches of Elia reflect the stamp and impress of the writer's own character, whereas in all those of Addison the personal peculiarities of the delineator (though known to the reader from the beginning through the account of the club) are nearly quiescent.) Now and then they are recalled into a momentary notice, but they do not act, or at all modify his pictures of Sir Roger or Will Wimble. *They* are slightly and amiably eccentric; but the Spectator himself, in describing them, takes the station of an ordinary observer.

Everywhere, indeed, in the writings of Lamb, and not merely in his *Elia*, the character of the writer co-operates in an under-current to the effect of the thing written. To understand, in the fullest sense, either the gaiety or the tenderness of a particular passage, you must have some insight into the particular bias of the writer's mind, whether native and original, or impressed gradually by the accidents of situation; whether simply developed out of predispositions by the action of life, or violently scorched into the constitution by some fierce fever of calamity. There is in modern literature a whole class of writers, though not a large one, standing within the same category: some marked originality of character in the writer becomes a co-efficient with what he says to a common result; you must sympathise with this *personality* in the author before you can appreciate the most significant parts of his views. . . . Perhaps we may pronounce Rabelais and Montaigne the earliest of writers in the class described. In the century following *theirs* came Sir Thomas Browne, and immediately after *him* La Fontaine. Then came Swift, Sterne, with others less distinguished: in Germany, Hippel, the friend of Kant, Harmann the obscure, and the greatest of the whole body—John Paul Fr. Richter. . . . But nowhere could illustrations be found more

interesting — shy, delicate, evanescent — shy as lightning, delicate and evanescent as the coloured pencillings on a frosty night from the northern lights,—than in the better parts of Lamb.

. . . .

Rich, indeed, in moral instruction was the life of Charles Lamb; and perhaps in one chief result it offers to the thoughtful observer a lesson of consolation that is awful, and of hope that ought to be immortal, viz. in the record which it furnishes that by meekness of submission, and by earnest conflict with evil in the spirit of cheerfulness, it is possible ultimately to disarm or to blunt the very heaviest of curses—even the curse of lunacy. Had it been whispered, in hours of infancy, to Lamb, by the angel who stood by his cradle—'Thou, and the sister that walks by ten years before thee, shall be through life, each to each, the solitary fountain of comfort; and, except it be from this fountain of mutual love, except it be as brother and sister, ye shall not taste the cup of peace on earth!'—here, if there was sorrow in reversion, there was also consolation.

But what funeral swamps would have instantly ingulfed this consolation, had some meddling fiend prolonged the revelation, and, holding up the curtain from the sad future a little longer, had said scornfully—'Peace on earth! Peace for you two, Charles and Mary Lamb! What peace is possible under the curse which even now is gathering against your heads? Is there peace on earth for the lunatic—peace for the parenticide—peace for the girl that, without warning, and without time granted for a penitential cry to Heaven, sends her mother to the last audit?' And then, without treachery, speaking bare truth, this prophet of woe might have added—'Thou also, thyself, Charles Lamb, thou in thy proper person, shalt enter the skirts of this dreadful hail-storm: even thou shalt taste the secrets of lunacy, and

enter as a captive its house of bondage [1]; whilst over thy sister the accursed scorpion shall hang suspended through life, like Death hanging over the beds of hospitals, striking at times, but more often threatening to strike; or withdrawing its instant menaces only to lay bare her mind more bitterly to the persecutions of a haunted memory!' Considering the nature of the calamity, in the first place; considering, in the second place, its life-long duration; and in the last place, considering the quality of the resistance by which it was met, and under what circumstances of humble resources in money or friends: we have come to the deliberate judgment that the whole range of history scarcely presents a more affecting spectacle of perpetual sorrow, humiliation, or conflict, and that was supported to the end (that is, through forty years) with more resignation, or with more absolute victory.

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May we, with all reverence for Lamb's exquisite genius, have permission to say that his own constitution of intellect sinned [like Hazlitt's] by this very habit of discontinuity. It was a habit of mind not unlikely to be cherished by his habits of life. Amongst these habits was the excess of his social kindness. He scorned so much to deny his company and his redundant hospitality to any man who manifested a wish for either by calling upon him, that he almost seemed to think it a criminality in himself if, by accident, he really *was* from home on your visit, rather than by possibility a negligence in you, that had not forewarned him of your intention. What was the consequence? All his life, from this and other causes, he must have read in the spirit of one liable to sudden interruption; like a dragoon, in fact, reading with one foot in the stirrup, when expecting momentarily a summons to mount for action. In such

[1] Lamb was himself confined for six weeks at one period of his life in a lunatic asylum.

situations, reading by snatches and by intervals of precarious leisure, people form inevitably the habit of seeking and unduly valuing condensations of the meaning, where in reality the truth suffers by this short-hand exhibition ; or else they demand too vivid illustrations of the meaning. . . .

To read therefore habitually by hurried instalments has this bad tendency—that it is likely to found a taste for modes of composition too artificially irritating, and to disturb the equilibrium of the judgment in relation to the colouring of style. Lamb, however, whose constitution of mind was even ideally sound in reference to the natural, the simple, the genuine, might seem of all men least liable to a taint in this direction. And undoubtedly he *was* so as regarded those modes of beauty which nature had specially qualified him for apprehending. Else, and in relation to other modes of beauty, where his sense of the true, and of its distinction from the spurious, had been an acquired sense, it is impossible for us to hide from ourselves that, not through habits only, not through stress of injurious accidents only, but by original structure and temperament of mind, Lamb had a bias towards those very defects on which rested the startling characteristics of style which we have been noticing. He himself, we fear, not bribed by indulgent feelings to another, not moved by friendship, but by native tendency, shrank from the continuous, from the sustained, from the elaborate.

The elaborate, indeed, without which much truth and beauty must perish in germ, was by name the object of his invectives. The instances are many, in his own beautiful essays, where he literally collapses, literally sinks away from openings suddenly offering themselves to flights of pathos or solemnity in direct prosecution of his own theme. On any such summons, where an ascending impulse and an untired pinion were required, he *refuses* himself (to use military language) invariably. The least observing reader of *Elia* cannot have failed to notice that the most felicitous passages

always accomplish their circuit in a few sentences. The gyration within which his sentiment wheels, no matter of what kind it may be, is always the shortest possible. It does not prolong itself—it does not repeat itself—it does not propagate itself. But, in fact, other features in Lamb's mind would have argued this feature by analogy, had we by accident been left unaware of it directly. It is not by chance, or without a deep ground in his nature, *common* to all his qualities, both affirmative and negative, that Lamb had an insensibility to music more absolute than can have been often shared by any human creature, or perhaps than was ever before acknowledged so candidly. The sense of music—as a pleasurable sense, or as any sense at all other than of certain unmeaning and impertinent differences in respect to high and low, sharp or flat—was utterly obliterated, as with a sponge, by nature herself from Lamb's organization. It was a corollary, from the same large *substratum* in his nature, that Lamb had no sense of the rhythmical in prose composition. Rhythmus, or pomp of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses, in the structure of sentences, were effects of art as much thrown away upon *him* as the voice of the charmer upon the deaf adder. We ourselves, occupying the very station of polar opposition to that of Lamb,—being as morbidly, perhaps, in the one excess as he in the other,—naturally detected this omission in Lamb's nature at an early stage of our acquaintance. Not the fabled Regulus, with his eyelids torn away, and his uncurtained eyeballs exposed to the noon-tide glare of a Carthaginian sun, could have shrieked with more anguish of recoil from torture than we from certain sentences and periods in which Lamb perceived no fault at all. *Pomp*, in our apprehension, was an idea of two categories: the *pompous* might be spurious, but it might also be genuine. It is well to love the simple—*we* love it; nor is there any opposition at all between *that* and the very glory of pomp. But, as we once put the case to Lamb, if, as a

musician, as the leader of a mighty orchestra, you had this theme offered to you—'Belshazzar the King gave a great feast to a thousand of his lords'—or this, 'And, on a certain day, Marcus Cicero stood up, and in a set speech rendered solemn thanks to Caius Cæsar for Quintus Ligarius pardoned, and for Marcus Marcellus restored'—surely no man would deny that, in such a case, simplicity, though in a passive sense not lawfully absent, must stand aside as totally insufficient for the *positive* part. Simplicity might guide even here, but could not furnish the power; a rudder it might be, but not an oar or a sail. This Lamb was ready to allow; as an intellectual *quiddity*, he recognised pomp in the character of a privileged thing; he was obliged to do so; for take away from great ceremonial festivals, such as the solemn rendering of thanks, the celebration of national anniversaries, the commemoration of public benefactors, &c., the element of pomp, and you take away their very meaning and life. But, whilst allowing a place for it in the rubric of the logician, it is certain that *sensuously* Lamb would not have sympathized with it, nor have *felt* its justification in any concrete instance. We find a difficulty in pursuing this subject without greatly exceeding the just limits. We pause, therefore, and add only this one suggestion as partly explanatory of the case. Lamb had the dramatic intellect and taste, perhaps in perfection; of the epic he had none at all. Here, as happens sometimes to men of genius preternaturally endowed in one direction, he might be considered as almost starved. A favourite of nature, so eminent in some directions, by what right could he complain that her bounties were not indiscriminate? From this defect in his nature it arose that, except by culture and by reflection, Lamb had no genial appreciation of Milton. The solemn planetary wheelings of the *Paradise Lost* were not to his taste. What he *did* comprehend were the motions like those of lightning, the fierce angular coruscations of that wild agency which comes,

forward so vividly in the sudden περιπέτεια, in the revolutionary catastrophe, and in the tumultuous conflicts, through persons or through situations, of the tragic drama.

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Charles Lamb is gone. His life was a continued struggle in the service of love the purest, and within a sphere visited by little of contemporary applause. Even his intellectual displays won but a narrow sympathy at any time, and in his earlier period were saluted with positive derision and contumely on the few occasions when they were not oppressed by entire neglect. But slowly all things right themselves. All merit which is founded in truth, and is strong enough, reaches by sweet exhalations in the end a higher sensory; reaches higher organs of discernment, lodged in a selecter audience. But the original obtuseness or vulgarity of feeling that thwarted all just estimation of Lamb in life will continue to thwart its popular diffusion. There are even some that continue to regard him with the old hostility, and the old unmitigated scorn. And we, therefore, standing by the side of Lamb's grave, seemed to hear, on one side (but in abated tones), strains of the ancient malice—'This man, that thought himself to be somebody, is dead, is buried, is forgotten!' and, on the other side, seemed to hear ascending as with the solemnity of a saintly requiem—'This man, that thought himself to be nobody, is dead, is buried; his life has been searched; and his memory is hallowed for ever!'

Selections from
LAMB'S
PROSE and POETRY

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

(1775–89)

Childhood in the Temple

(From 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple': *Elia*, 1823.)

I WAS born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places?—these are of my oldest recollections. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot.

There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,
The which on Themmes brode aged back doth ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer knights to bide,
Till they decayed through pride.

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time—the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet-street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that portion of it, which, from three sides, overlooks the greater garden: that goodly pile

Of building strong, albeit of Paper hight,

confronting, with massy contrast, the lighter, older, more fantastically shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the cheerful Crown-office Row (place of my kindly engendure), right opposite the stately stream, which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems but just weaned from her Twickenham Naiades! a man would give something to have been born in such places.

What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall, where the fountain plays, which I have made to rise and fall, how many times! to the astoundment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic! What an antique air had the now almost effaced sun-dials, with their moral inscriptions, seeming coevals with that Time which they measured, and to take their revelations of its flight immediately from heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light! How would the dark line steal imperceptibly on, watched by the eye of childhood, eager to detect its movement, never catched, nice as an evanescent cloud, or the first arrests of sleep!

> Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand
> Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived!

What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dulness of communication, compared with the simple altar-like structure, and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens. Why is it almost every where vanished? If its business-use be superseded by more elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labours, of pleasures not protracted after sun-set, of temperance, and good-hours. It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd 'carved it out quaintly in the sun'; and, turning philosopher by the very occupation, provided it with mottos more touching than tombstones. It was a pretty device of the gardener, recorded by Marvell, who, in the days of

artificial gardening, made a dial out of herbs and flowers. I must quote his verses a little higher up, for they are full, as all his serious poetry was, of a witty delicacy. They will not come in awkwardly, I hope, in a talk of fountains and sun-dials. He is speaking of sweet garden scenes:

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head.
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine.
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach.
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.
Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness.
The mind, that ocean, where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that 's made
To a green thought in a green shade.
Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.
How well the skilful gardener drew,
Of flowers and herbs, this dial new!
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers? [1]

The artificial fountains of the metropolis are, in like manner, fast vanishing. Most of them are dried up, or

[1] From a copy of verses entitled 'The Garden'

bricked over. Yet, where one is left, as in that little green nook behind the South-Sea House, what a freshness it gives to the dreary pile! Four little winged marble boys used to play their virgin fancies, spouting out ever fresh streams from their innocent-wanton lips, in the square of Lincoln's-inn, when I was no bigger than they were figured. They are gone, and the spring choked up. The fashion, they tell me, is gone by, and these things are esteemed childish. Why not then gratify children, by letting them stand? Lawyers, I suppose, were children once. They are awakening images to them at least. Why must every thing smack of man, and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the child's heart left, to respond to its earliest enchantments? The figures were grotesque. Are the stiff-wigged living figures, that still flitter and chatter about that area, less gothic in appearance? or is the splutter of their hot rhetoric one half so refreshing and innocent as the little cool playful streams those exploded cherubs uttered?

They have lately gothicised the entrance to the Inner Temple-hall, and the library front, to assimilate them, I suppose, to the body of the hall, which they do not at all resemble. What is become of the winged horse that stood over the former? a stately arms! and who has removed those frescoes of the Virtues, which Italianized the end of the Paper-buildings?—my first hint of allegory! They must account to me for these things, which I miss so greatly.

The terrace is, indeed, left, which we used to call the parade; but the traces are passed away of the footsteps which made its pavement awful! It is become common and profane. The old benchers had it almost sacred to themselves, in the forepart of the day at least. They might not be sided or jostled. Their air and dress asserted the parade. You left wide spaces betwixt you, when you

passed them. We walk on even terms with their successors. The roguish eye of J——ll, ever ready to be delivered of a jest, almost invites a stranger to vie a repartee with it. But what insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry?—whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the brow-beater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear. His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke, his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic nostril, darkening the air. He took it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once, diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tinctured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of obsolete gold. And so he paced the terrace.

By his side a milder form was sometimes to be seen; the pensive gentility of Samuel Salt. They were coevals, and had nothing but that and their benchership in common. In politics Salt was a whig, and Coventry a staunch tory. Many a sarcastic growl did the latter cast out—for Coventry had a rough spinous humour—at the political confederates of his associate, which rebounded from the gentle bosom of the latter like cannon-balls from wool. You could not ruffle Samuel Salt.

S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of the law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise, came before him, he ordinarily handed it over

with a few instructions to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would despatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a dinner party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was any thing which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it.—He was to dine at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution;—and L. who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out, schooled him with great anxiety not in any possible manner to allude to her story that day. S. promised faithfully to observe the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlour, where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes, when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of window, and pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, 'it was a gloomy day,' and added, 'Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose.' Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same good fortune among the female world,—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him—I suppose, because he never trifled or talked gallantry with them, or paid them, indeed,

hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person, but wanted, methought, the spirit that should have shown them off with advantage to the women. His eye lacked lustre.—Not so, thought Susan P——; who, at the advanced age of sixty, was seen, in the cold evening time, unaccompanied, wetting the pavement of B——d Row, with tears that fell in drops which might be heard, because her friend had died that day—he, whom she had pursued with a hopeless passion for the last forty years—a passion, which years could not extinguish or abate; nor the long resolved, yet gently enforced, puttings off of unrelenting bachelorhood dissuade from its cherished purpose. Mild Susan P——, thou hast now thy friend in heaven!

Thomas Coventry was a cadet of the noble family of that name. He passed his youth in contracted circumstances, which gave him early those parsimonious habits which in after-life never forsook him; so that, with one windfall or another, about the time I knew him he was master of four or five hundred thousand pounds; nor did he look, or walk, worth a moidore less. He lived in a gloomy house opposite the pump in Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street. J., the counsel, is doing self-imposed penance in it, for what reason I divine not, at this day. C. had an agreeable seat at North Cray, where he seldom spent above a day or two at a time in the summer; but preferred, during the hot months, standing at his window in this damp, close, well-like mansion, to watch, as he did, 'the maids drawing water all day long.' I suspect he had his within-door reasons for the preference. *Hic currus et arma fuêre.* He might think his treasures more safe. His house had the aspect of a strong box. C. was a close hunks—a hoarder rather than a miser—or, if a miser, none of the mad Elwes breed, who have brought discredit upon a character, which cannot exist without certain admirable points of steadiness and unity of purpose. One may hate

a true miser, but cannot, I suspect, so easily despise him. By taking care of the pence, he is often enabled to part with the pounds, upon a scale that leaves us careless generous fellows halting at an immeasurable distance behind. C. gave away 30,000*l.* at once in his life-time to a blind charity. His house-keeping was severely looked after, but he kept the table of a gentleman. He would know who came in and who went out of his house, but his kitchen chimney was never suffered to freeze.

Salt was his opposite in this, as in all—never knew what he was worth in the world ; and having but a competency for his rank, which his indolent habits were little calculated to improve, might have suffered severely if he had not had honest people about him. Lovel took care of every thing. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his ' flapper ', his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in anything without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant.

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and ' would strike '. In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him ; and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bare-headed to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never forgot rank, where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as

Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior—moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits, and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Isaak Walton would have chosen to go a fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness—'a remnant most forlorn of what he was,'—yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of his favourite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes—'was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee.' At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery to see her, and she blessed herself at the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was 'her own bairn'. And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep, till I have wished that sad second-childhood might have a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers. . . .

Fantastic forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? Ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry

a figure in my relation, who made up to me—to my childish eyes—the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as 'old men covered with a mantle', walking upon the earth. Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish,—extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling,—in the heart of childhood, there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition—the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital—from every-day forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

Mr. Billet, a Poor Relation

(From 'Poor Relations': *Last Essays of Elia*, 1833.)

At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity; his words few or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so—for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been school-fellows a world ago at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities

and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; a captive—a stately being, let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual general respect which we all in common manifested towards him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument, touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill, and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Minster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plain-born, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remember with anguish the thought that came over me: 'Perhaps he will never come here again.' He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused

with a resistance amounting to rigour—when my aunt, an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this, in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season—uttered the following memorable application—'Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day.' The old gentleman said nothing at the time—but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it—'Woman, you are superannuated.' John Billet did not survive long, after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored! and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (Anno 1781) where he had long held, what he accounted, a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escrutoire after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

Blakesmoor in H——shire

(*Last Essays of Elia*, 1833.)

I DO not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy: and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church.

In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain-glory, on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonising the place and the occasion. But would'st thou know the beauty of holiness ?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church : think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down ; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates ? What bounded the court-yard ? Whereabout did the out-houses commence ? a few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at 'the plucking of every pannel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have

cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plat before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns ; or a pannel of the yellow room.

Why, every plank and pannel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bed-rooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vivider than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana ; and the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day-time, with a passion of fear ; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again ?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how

few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Lacus Incognitus of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden ?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison; and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet—

> Bind me, ye woodbines, in your 'twines,
> Curl me about, ye gadding vines;
> And oh so close your circles lace,
> That I may never leave this place;
> But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
> Ere I your silken bondage break,
> Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
> And, courteous briars, nail me through!

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's

oi De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as those who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea? Is it trenchant to their swords? can it be hacked off as a spur can? or torn away like a tarnished garter?

What, else, were the families of the great to us? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within as to a cognate and correspondent elevation?

Or wherefore, else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters—thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic 'Resurgam'—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights, hast detained my steps from bedwards, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

This is the only true gentry by adoption; the veritable change of blood, and, not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I inquired not; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damœtas—feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lintoln—did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Ægon?—repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his life-time upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners

of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W——s; and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas, to recognise the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H——shire hair, and eye of watchet blue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia,—Mildred Elia, I take it.

Mine too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall, with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round: of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality.

Mine too, thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine too—whose else?—thy costly fruit-garden, with its sun-baked southern wall; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-pots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespake their pristine state

to have been gilt and glittering; the verdant quarters backwarder still; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring woodpigeon, with that antique image in the centre, God or Goddess I wist not; but child of Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to Sylvanus in their groves, than I to that fragmental mystery.

Was it for this, that I kissed my childish hands too fervently in your idol worship, walks and windings of BLAKESMOOR! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places? I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to be revivified.

His First Play

(From 'My First Play': *Elia*, 1823.)

AT the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old door-way, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to Old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see *my first play*. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that the rain should cease. With what a beating heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ràn to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had

sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies's) at the corner of Featherstone-building, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to, and visited by, Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his wife on her elopement with him from a boarding-school at Bath—the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge.—From either of these connexions it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury-lane theatre at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many year's nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded *vice versa*—but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro—in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicized, into something like *verse verse*. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed

(but that was little) to the highest parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead—and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans!—slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own—situate near the roadway village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!—with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again!—with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable play-house accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, 'Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play;'—chase *pro* chuse. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed——the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to Troilus and Cressida, in Rowe's Shakspeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening.—The boxes at that

time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistering substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy!—The orchestra lights at length arose, those 'fair Auroras!' Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old—and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time; and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams.—Harlequin's Invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

Christ's Hospital

THE BLUE-COAT BOY

(From *Recollections of Christ's Hospital*, 1813.)

THE Christ's Hospital or Blue-coat boy, has a distinctive character of his own, as far removed from the abject qualities of a common charity-boy as it is from the disgusting forwardness of a lad brought up at some other of the public schools. There is *pride* in it, accumulated from the circumstances which I have described as differencing him from the former; and there is a *restraining modesty*, from a sense of obligation and dependence, which must ever keep his deportment from assimilating to that of the latter. His very garb, as it is antique and venerable, feeds his self-respect; as it is a badge of dependence, it restrains the natural petulance of that age from breaking out into overt-acts of insolence. This produces silence and a reserve before strangers, yet not that cowardly shyness which boys mewed up at home will feel; he will speak up when spoken to, but the stranger must begin the conversation with him. Within his bounds he is all fire and play; but in the streets he steals along with all the self-concentration of a young monk. He is never known to mix with other boys, they are a sort of laity to him. All this proceeds, I have no doubt, from the continual consciousness which he carries about him of the difference of his dress from that of the rest of the world; with a modest jealousy over himself, lest, by over-hastily mixing with common and secular playfellows, he should commit the dignity of his cloth. . . .

In affectionate recollections of the place where he was bred up, in hearty recognitions of old schoolfellows met with again after the lapse of years, or in foreign countries, the Christ's Hospital boy yields to none; I might almost say, he goes beyond most other boys. The very compass

and magnitude of the school, its thousand bearings, the space it takes up in the imagination beyond the ordinary schools, impresses a remembrance, accompanied with an elevation of mind, that attends him through life. It is too big, too affecting an object, to pass away quickly from his mind. The Christ's Hospital boy's friends at school are commonly his intimates through life. For me, I do not know whether a constitutional imbecility does not incline me too obstinately to cling to the remembrances of childhood; in an inverted ratio to the usual sentiments of mankind, nothing that I have been engaged in since seems of any value or importance, compared to the colours which imagination gave to everything then. I belong to no *body corporate* such as I then made a part of. . . .

The time would fail me if I were to attempt to enumerate all those circumstances, some pleasant, some attended with some pain, which, seen through the mist of distance, come sweetly softened to the memory. But I must crave leave to remember our transcending superiority in those invigorating sports, leap-frog, and basting the bear; our delightful excursions in the summer holidays to the New River, near Newington, where, like otters, we would live the long day in the water, never caring for dressing ourselves when we had once stripped; our savoury meals afterwards, when we came home almost famished with staying out all day without our dinners; our visits at other times to the Tower, where, by antient privilege, we had free access to all the curiosities; our solemn processions through the City at Easter, with the Lord Mayor's largess of buns, wine, and a shilling, with the festive questions and civil pleasantries of the dispensing Alderman, which were more to us than all the rest of the banquet; our stately suppings in public, where the well-lighted hall, and the confluence of well-dressed company who came to see us, made the whole look more like a concert or assembly, than a scene of a plain

bread and cheese collation; the annual orations upon St. Matthew's day, in which the senior scholar, before he had done, seldom failed to reckon up, among those who had done honour to our school by being educated in it, the names of those accomplished critics and Greek scholars, Joshua Barnes and Jeremiah Markland (I marvel they left out Camden while they were about it). Let me have leave to remember our hymns and anthems, and well-toned organ; the doleful tune of the burial anthem chanted in the solemn cloisters, upon the seldom-occurring funeral of some school-fellow; the festivities at Christmas, when the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire, replenished to the height with logs, and the penniless, and he that could contribute nothing, partook in all the mirth, and in some of the substantialities of the feasting; the carol sung by night at that time of the year, which when a young boy, I have so often lain awake to hear from seven (the hour of going to bed) till ten, when it was sung by the older boys and monitors, and have listened to it, in their rude chanting, till I have been transported in fancy to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song which was sung at that season by angels' voices to the shepherds.

UPPER AND LOWER SCHOOL

(From 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago': *Elia*, 1823.)

The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room; and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master; but the Rev. Matthew Field presided over that portion of the apartment, of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an

accidence, or a grammar, for form; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good will—holding it 'like a dancer'. It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority; and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often staid away whole days from us; and when he came, it made no difference to us—he had his private room to retire to, the short time he staid, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to 'insolent Greece or haughty Rome', that passed current among us—Peter Wilkins—the Adventures of the Hon. Capt. Robert Boyle—the Fortunate Blue Coat Boy—and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic or scientific operations; making little sun-dials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses, called *cat-cradles*; or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game 'French and English', and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the *gentleman*, the *scholar*, and the *Christian*; but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with

his courtly bow at some episcopal levée, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education; and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on thus, I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions, that he was not altogether displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young Spartans. He would sometimes, with ironic deference, send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with Sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys, 'how neat and fresh the twigs looked.' While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched us; contrary to Gideon's miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry. His boys turned out the better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a 'playing holiday'.

EARLY MANHOOD (1796–1803)

A Family Tragedy

(To Coleridge, Sept. 27, 1796.)

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines :—My poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris, of the Blue-coat School, has been very very kind to us, and we have no other friend ; but, thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but [no mention of what is gone and done with. With me 'the former things are passed away,' and I have something more to do than to feel.]

God Almighty have us all in His keeping.

C. LAMB.

Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind.

On his Sister's Illness

(To Coleridge, Oct. 17, 1796.)

MARY continues serene and cheerful. I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me ; for, though I see her almost every day, yet we delight to write to one another, for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house. I have not the letter by me, but will quote

from memory what she wrote in it: 'I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight, when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. [The spirit of my mother seems to descend and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me. I shall see her again in heaven; she will then understand me better.] My grandmother, too, will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, "Polly, what are those poor crazy moythered brains of yours thinking of always?"' Poor Mary! . . . I will, some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my sister's excellences; it will seem like exaggeration, but I will do it.

Loneliness

(To Coleridge, Dec. 10, 1796.)

PUBLISH your Burns when and how you like, it will be new to me,—my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours. I am jealous of your fraternizing with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns, or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the 'divine chit-chat' of the latter: by the expression, I see you thoroughly relish him. I love Mrs. Coleridge for her excuses an hundred fold more dearly, than if she heaped 'line upon line,' out Hannah-ing Hannah More; and had rather hear you sing 'Did a very little baby' by your family fire-side, than listen to you, when you were repeating one of Bowles' sweetest sonnets, in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fire-side at the Salutation. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one 'cordial in this melancholy vale'—the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish;

but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here: scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament,—they talk a language I understand not, I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with the dead in their books. My sister, indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading and knowledge from the self-same sources; our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow; never having kept separate company, or any 'company' *together*—never having read separate books, and few books *together*—what knowledge have we to convey to each other? [In our little range of duties and connections, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion, rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us.]

The Old Familiar Faces

(January, 1798.)

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood.
Earth seemed a desart I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

Hester

(February, 1803.)

When maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flush'd her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call:—if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet fore-warning?

LONDON AND THE LAKES (1801–2)

On an Invitation to the Lakes

(To Wordsworth, Jan. 30, 1801.)

I OUGHT before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang any where; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't now care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet-street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles;—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet-street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old bookstalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from

kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local—I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books,) to groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog (only exceeding him in knowledge,) wherever I have moved,—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses—have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind; and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, *and my sister's*, to D. and your*self*. And a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite. C. L.

Thank you for liking my play!

Return to the Temple

(To Thomas Manning, February, 1801.)

I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tip-toe) over the Thames, and Surrey Hills; at the upper end of King's Bench walks, in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind, for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em) since I resided in town. Like the country mouse, that had tasted a little of urbane manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self, without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pairs of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of that enchanting, more than Mahometan paradise, London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastry-cooks! St. Paul's church-yard, the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! An't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchymy that turns her mud into that metal,—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

'Tis half-past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed. . . .

C. Lamb (as you may guess).

The Londoner

(First published, February, 1802.)

To the Editor of the Reflector.

Mr. Reflector,—I was born under the shadow of St. Dunstan's steeple, just where the conflux of the eastern and western inhabitants of this twofold city meet and justle in friendly opposition at Temple-bar. The same day which gave me to the world, saw London happy in the celebration of her great annual feast. This I cannot help looking upon as a lively omen of the future great good will which I was destined to bear toward the city, resembling in kind that solicitude which every Chief Magistrate is supposed to feel for whatever concerns her interests and well being. Indeed I consider myself in some sort a speculative Lord Mayor of London: for though circumstances unhappily preclude me from the hope of ever arriving at the dignity of a gold chain and Spital Sermon, yet thus much will I say of myself in truth that Whittington with his Cat (just emblem of vigilance and a furred gown) never went beyond me in affection, which I bear to the citizens.

I was born, as you have heard, in a crowd. This has begot in me an entire affection for that way of life, amounting to an almost insurmountable aversion from solitude and rural scenes. This aversion was never interrupted or suspended, except for a few years in the younger part of my life, during a period in which I had set my affections upon a charming young woman. Every man while the passion is upon him, is for a time at least addicted to groves and meadows and purling streams. During this short period of my existence, I contracted just familiarity enough with rural objects to understand tolerably well ever after the *poets*, when they declaim in such passionate terms in favor of a country life.

For my own part, now the fit is past, I have no hesitation in declaring, that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury-lane Theatre, just at the hour of six, gives me ten thousand sincerer pleasures, than I could ever receive from all the flocks of silly sheep that ever whitened the plains of Arcadia or Epsom Downs.

This passion for crowds is no where feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy, who can be dull in Fleet-street. I am naturally inclined to hypochondria, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humour till tears have wetted my cheek for inutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the scenes of a shifting pantomime.

The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops where *Fancy miscalled Folly* is supplied with its perpetual gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesman—things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage—do not affect me with disgust ; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness : I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honor at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the detection of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than a hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man in all ages has leaned to order and good government.

Thus an art of extracting morality from the commonest incidents of a town life, is attained by the same well-natured alchymy, with which the Foresters of Arden, in a beautiful country,

> Found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Where has spleen her food but in London? Humour, Interest, Curiosity, suck at her measureless breasts without a possibility of being satiated. Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke, what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes!

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

A LONDONER.

The Lambs in the Lakes

(To Thomas Manning, Sept. 24, 1802.)

My dear Manning,—Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time of my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year, prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was, a tour to the lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for, my time being precious, did not admit of it.

He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seem'd, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c. &c. We thought we had got into fairy land. But that went off (and it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose that I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study, which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old fashioned organ, never play'd upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Eolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, &c. And all looking out upon the fading view of Skiddaw, and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we staid three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater; I forget the name; to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw,

and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water, she surmounted it most manfully. O, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controul'd by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature.

THE THEATRE AND DRAMATIC CRITICISMS (from 1802)

The General Lover and the Forest Life

(From *John Woodvil: A Tragedy*. Act ii, Sc. 2. 1802.)

Sir Walter. Fie upon it.
All men are false, I think. The date of love
Is out, expired, its stories all grown stale,
O'erpast, forgotten, like an antique tale
Of Hero and Leander.

Simon. I have known some men that are too general-contemplative for the narrow passion. I am in some sort a *general* lover.

Margaret. In the name of the boy God, who plays at hood-man-blind with the Muses, and cares not whom he catches: what is it *you* love?

Simon. Simply, all things that live,
From the crook'd worm to man's imperial form,
And God-resembling likeness. The poor fly,
That makes short holyday in the sun beam,
And dies by some child's hand. The feeble bird
With little wings, yet greatly venturous
In the upper sky. The fish in th' other element,
That knows no touch of eloquence. What else?
Yon tall and elegant stag,
Who paints a dancing shadow of his horns
In the water, where he drinks.

Margaret. I myself love all these things, yet so as with a difference:—for example, some animals better than others, some men rather than other men; the nightingale before the cuckoo, the swift and graceful palfrey before the slow and asinine mule. Your humour goes to confound all qualities.

What sports do you use in the forest?—

Simon. Not many; some few, as thus:—
To see the sun to bed, and to arise,
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him,
With all his fires and travelling glories round him.
Sometimes the moon on soft night clouds to rest,
Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast,
And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep.
Sometimes outstretcht, in very idleness,
Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
Go eddying round; and small birds, how they fare,
When mother Autumn fills their beaks with corn,
Filch'd from the careless Amalthea's horn;
And how the woods berries and worms provide
Without their pains, when earth has nought beside
To answer their small wants.
To view the graceful deer come tripping by,
Then stop, and gaze, then turn, they know not why,
Like bashful younkers in society.
To mark the structure of a plant or tree,
And all fair things of earth, how fair they be.

Margaret (*smiling*). And, afterwards them paint in simile.

On Stage Morality

(From *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakspeare*, 1808.)

A PURITANICAL obtuseness of sentiment, a stupid infantile goodness, is creeping among us, instead of the vigorous passions, and virtues clad in flesh and blood, with which the old dramatists present us. Those noble and liberal casuists could discern in the differences, the quarrels, the animosities of men, a beauty and truth of moral feeling

no less than in the everlastingly inculcated duties of forgiveness and atonement. With us, all is hypocritical meekness. A reconciliation-scene, be the occasion never so absurd, never fails of applause. Our audiences come to the theatre to be complimented on their goodness.

On the Representation of Poverty on the Stage

(From *Specimens*, 1808.)

The old play-writers are distinguished by an honest boldness of exhibition, they shew every thing without being ashamed. If a reverse in fortune is to be exhibited, they fairly bring us to the prison-grate and the alms-basket. A poor man on our stage is always a gentleman, he may be known by a peculiar neatness of apparel, and by wearing black. Our delicacy in fact forbids the dramatizing of distress at all. It is never shown in its essential properties; it appears but as the adjunct of some virtue, as something which is to be relieved, from the approbation of which relief the spectators are to derive a certain soothing of self-referred satisfaction. We turn away from the real essences of things to hunt after their relative shadows, moral duties; whereas, if the truth of things were fairly represented, the relative duties might be safely trusted to themselves, and moral philosophy lose the name of a science.

On the Witches in 'Macbeth'

(From *Specimens*, 1808.)

Though some resemblance may be traced between the charms in Macbeth, and the incantations in this play [Middleton's *The Witch*], which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakspeare. His witches are distinguished from the

witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman, plotting some dire mischief, might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet with Macbeth's, he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These witches can hurt the body, those have power over the soul. Hecate in Middleton has a son, a low buffoon: the hags of Shakspeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul anomalies, of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them. Except Hecate, they have no *names*; which heightens their mysteriousness. The names, and some of the properties, which the other author has given to his hags, excite smiles. The Weïrd Sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth.

On the Tragedies of Shakspeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage Representation

(First printed in *The Reflector*, Oct.–Dec. 1811.)

TAKING a turn the other day in the Abbey, I was struck with the affected attitude of a figure, which I do not remember to have seen before, and which upon examination proved to be a whole-length of the celebrated Mr. Garrick. Though I would not go so far with some good catholics abroad as to shut players altogether out of consecrated ground, yet I own I was not a little scandalized at the introduction of theatrical airs and gestures into a place set apart to remind us of the saddest realities. Going

nearer, I found inscribed under this harlequin figure the following lines:

To paint fair Nature by divine command,
Her magic pencil in his glowing hand,
A Shakspeare rose: then, to expand his fame
Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came.
Though sunk in death the forms the Poet drew,
The Actor's genius bade them breathe anew;
Though, like the bard himself, in night they lay,
Immortal Garrick call'd them back to day:
And till Eternity with power sublime
Shall mark the mortal hour of hoary Time,
Shakspeare and Garrick like twin-stars shall shine,
And earth irradiate with a beam divine.

It would be an insult to my readers' understandings to attempt any thing like a criticism on this farrago of false thoughts and nonsense. But the reflection it led me into was a kind of wonder, how, from the day of the actor here celebrated to our own, it should have been the fashion to compliment every performer in his turn that has had the luck to please the town in any of the great characters of Shakspeare, with the notion of possessing a *mind congenial with the poet's*: how people should come thus unaccountably to confound the power of originating poetical images and conceptions with the faculty of being able to read or recite the same when put into words;[1] or what connection that absolute mastery over the heart and soul of man, which a great dramatic poet possesses, has with those low tricks upon the eye and ear, which a player by observing a few

[1] It is observable that we fall into this confusion only in *dramatic* recitations. We never dream that the gentleman who reads Lucretius in public with great applause, is therefore a great poet and philosopher; nor do we find that Tom Davies, the bookseller, who is recorded to have recited the Paradise Lost better than any man in England in his day (though I cannot help thinking there must be some mistake in this tradition), was therefore, by his intimate friends, set upon a level with Milton.

general effects, which some common passion, as grief, anger, &c. usually has upon the gestures and exterior, can so easily compass. To know the internal workings and movements of a great mind, of an Othello or a Hamlet for instance, the *when* and the *why* and the *how far* they should be moved ; to what pitch a passion is becoming ; to give the reins and to pull in the curb exactly at the moment when the drawing in or the slackening is most graceful ; seems to demand a reach of intellect of a vastly different extent from that which is employed upon the bare imitation of the signs of these passions in the countenance or gesture, which signs are usually observed to be most lively and emphatic in the weaker sort of minds, and which signs can after all but indicate some passion, as I said before, anger, or grief, generally ; but of the motives and grounds of the passion, wherein it differs from the same passion in low and vulgar natures, of these the actor can give no more idea by his face or gesture than the eye (without a metaphor) can speak, or the muscles utter intelligible sounds. But such is the instantaneous nature of the impressions which we take in at the eye and ear at a playhouse, compared with the slow apprehension oftentimes of the understanding in reading, that we are apt not only to sink the play-writer in the consideration which we pay to the actor, but even to identify in our mind in a perverse manner, the actor with the character which he represents. It is difficult for a frequent playgoer to disembarrass the idea of Hamlet from the person and voice of Mr. K. We speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs. S. Nor is this confusion incidental alone to unlettered persons who, not possessing the advantage of reading, are necessarily dependent upon the stage-player for all the pleasure which they can receive from the drama, and to whom the very idea of *what an author is* cannot be made comprehensible without some pain and perplexity of mind : the error is one from

which persons otherwise not meanly lettered, find it almost impossible to extricate themselves.

Never let me be so ungrateful as to forget the very high degree of satisfaction which I received some years back from seeing for the first time a tragedy of Shakspeare performed, in which these two great performers sustained the principal parts. It seemed to embody and realize conceptions which had hitherto assumed no distinct shape. But dearly do we pay all our life after for this juvenile pleasure, this sense of distinctness. When the novelty is past, we find to our cost that instead of realizing an idea, we have only materialized and brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood. We have let go a dream, in quest of an unattainable substance.

How cruelly this operates upon the mind, to have its free conceptions thus crampt and pressed down to the measure of a strait-lacing actuality, may be judged from that delightful sensation of freshness, with which we turn to those plays of Shakspeare which have escaped being performed, and to those passages in the acting plays of the same writer which have happily been left out in performance. How far the very custom of hearing any thing *spouted*, withers and blows upon a fine passage, may be seen in those speeches from Henry the Fifth, &c. which are current in the mouths of school-boys from their being to be found in *Enfield Speakers*, and such kind of books. I confess myself utterly unable to appreciate that celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, beginning 'To be or not to be', or to tell whether it be good, bad, or indifferent, it has been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men, and torn so inhumanely from its living place and principle of continuity in the play, till it is become to me a perfect dead member.

It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakspeare are less calculated for performance on a stage, than those of almost any other

dramatist whatever. Their distinguished excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do. . . .

The character of Hamlet is perhaps that by which, since the days of Betterton, a succession of popular performers have had the greatest ambition to distinguish themselves. The length of the part may be one of their reasons. But for the character itself, we find it in a play, and therefore we judge it a fit subject of dramatic representation. The play itself abounds in maxims and reflexions beyond any other, and therefore we consider it as a proper vehicle for conveying moral instruction. But Hamlet himself—what does he suffer meanwhile by being dragged forth as a public schoolmaster, to give lectures to the crowd! Why, nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does, are transactions between himself and his moral sense, they are the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to pour forth; or rather, they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to *words* for the sake of the reader, who must else remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scarce dares utter to deaf walls and chambers, how can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once? I say not that it is the fault of the actor so to do; he must pronounce them *ore rotundo*, he must accompany them with his eye, he must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone, or gesture, or he fails. *He must be thinking all the while of his appearance, because he knows that all the while the spectators are judging of it.* And this is the way to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet.

It is true that there is no other mode of conveying a vast

quantity of thought and feeling to a great portion of the audience, who otherwise would never earn it for themselves by reading, and the intellectual acquisition gained this way may, for aught I know, be inestimable; but I am not arguing that Hamlet should not be acted, but how much Hamlet is made another thing by being acted. . . .

So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakspeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when in his reproaches to them for

conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that 'they themselves are old'. What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it shew: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if at his years, and with his experience, any thing was left but to die.

Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage.

Prologue to Coleridge's Tragedy of 'Remorse' (1813)

THERE are, I am told, who sharply criticise
Our modern theatres' unwieldy size.
We players shall scarce plead guilty to that charge,
Who think a house can never be too large:
Griev'd when a rant, that's worth a nation's ear,
Shakes some prescrib'd Lyceum's petty sphere;
And pleased to mark the grin from space to space
Spread epidemic o'er a town's broad face.—
O might old Betterton or Booth return
To view our structures from their silent urn,

Could Quin come stalking from Elysian glades,
Or Garrick get a day-rule from the shades—
Where now, perhaps, in mirth which Spirits approve,
He imitates the ways of men above,
And apes the actions of our upper coast,
As in his days of flesh he play'd the ghost :—
How might they bless our ampler scope to please,
And hate their own old shrunk up audiences.—
Their houses yet were palaces to those,
Which Ben and Fletcher for their triumphs chose.
Shakespeare, who wish'd a kingdom for a stage,
Like giant pent in disproportion'd cage,
Mourn'd his contracted strengths and crippled rage.
He who could tame his vast ambition down
To please some scatter'd gleanings of a town,
And, if some hundred auditors supplied
Their meagre meed of claps, was satisfied,
How had he felt, when that dread curse of Lear's
Had burst tremendous on a thousand ears,
While deep-struck wonder from applauding bands
Return'd the tribute of as many hands!
Rude were his guests; he never made his bow
To such an audience as salutes us now.
He lack'd the balm of labor, female praise.
Few ladies in his time frequented plays,
Or came to see a youth with awkward art
And shrill sharp pipe burlesque the woman's part.
The very use, since so essential grown,
Of painted scenes, was to his stage unknown.
The air-blest castle, round whose wholesome crest
The martlet, guest of summer, chose her nest—
The forest walks of Arden's fair domain,
Where Jaques fed his solitary vein,
No pencil's aid as yet had dared supply,
Seen only by the intellectual eye.

Those scenic helps, denied to Shakespeare's page,
Our author owes to a more liberal age.
Nor pomp nor circumstance are wanting here;
'Tis for himself alone that he must fear.
Yet shall remembrance cherish the just pride,
That (be the laurel granted or denied)
He first essay'd in this distinguish'd fane,
Severer muses and a tragic strain.

On Bensley's Malvolio

(From the Essay 'On Some of the Old Actors': *Elia*, 1823.)

Of all the actors who flourished in my time—a melancholy phrase if taken aright, reader—Bensley had most of the swell of soul, was greatest in the delivery of heroic conceptions, the emotions consequent upon the presentment of a great idea to the fancy. He had the true poetical enthusiasm—the rarest faculty among players. None that I remember possessed even a portion of that fine madness which he threw out in Hotspur's famous rant about glory, or the transports of the Venetian incendiary at the vision of the fired city. His voice had the dissonance, and at times the inspiring effect of the trumpet. His gait was uncouth and stiff, but no way embarrassed by affectation; and the thorough-bred gentleman was uppermost in every movement. He seized the moment of passion with the greatest truth; like a faithful clock, never striking before the time; never anticipating or leading you to anticipate. He was totally destitute of trick and artifice. He seemed come upon the stage to do the poet's message simply, and he did it with as genuine fidelity as the nuncios in Homer deliver the errands of the gods. He let the passion or the sentiment do its own work without prop or bolstering. He would have scorned to mountebank it; and betrayed none of that *cleverness* which is the bane of serious acting. For

this reason, his Iago was the only endurable one which I remember to have seen. No spectator from his action could divine more of his artifice than Othello was supposed to do. His confessions in soliloquy alone put you in possession of the mystery. There were no by-intimations to make the audience fancy their own discernment so much greater than that of the Moor—who commonly stands like a great helpless mark set up for mine Ancient, and a quantity of barren spectators, to shoot their bolts at. The Iago of Bensley did not go to work so grossly. There was a triumphant tone about the character, natural to a general consciousness of power; but none of that petty vanity which chuckles and cannot contain itself upon any little successful stroke of its knavery—as is common with your small villains, and green probationers in mischief. It did not clap or crow before its time. It was not a man setting his wits at a child, and winking all the while at other children who are mightily pleased at being let into the secret; but a consummate villain entrapping a noble nature into toils, against which no discernment was available, where the manner was as fathomless as the purpose seemed dark, and without motive. The part of Malvolio, in the Twelfth Night, was performed by Bensley, with a richness and a dignity, of which (to judge from some recent castings of that character) the very tradition must be worn out from the stage. No manager in those days would have dreamed of giving it to Mr. Baddeley, or Mr. Parsons: when Bensley was occasionally absent from the theatre, John Kemble thought it no derogation to succeed to the part. Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. Maria describes him as a sort of Puritan; and he might have worn his gold chain with honour in one of our old round-head families, in the service of a Lambert.

or a Lady Fairfax. But his morality and his manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest. Still his pride, or his gravity, (call it which you will) is inherent, and native to the man, not mock or affected, which latter only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at the best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible. His bearing is lofty, a little above his station, but probably not much above his deserts. We see no reason why he should not have been brave, honourable, accomplished. His careless committal of the ring to the ground (which he was commissioned to restore to Cesario), bespeaks a generosity of birth and feeling.[1] His dialect on all occasions is that of a gentleman, and a man of education. We must not confound him with the eternal old, low steward of comedy. He is master of the household to a great Princess ; a dignity probably conferred upon him for other respects than age or length of service.[2] Olivia, at the first indication of his supposed madness, declares that she 'would not have him miscarry for half of her dowry '. Does this look as if the character was meant to appear little or insignificant ? Once, indeed, she accuses him to his face—of what ?—of being 'sick of self-love ',—but with a gentleness and considerateness

[1] *Viola*. She took the ring from me ; I'll none of it.
Mal. Come, Sir, you peevishly threw it to her ; and her will is, it should be so returned. If it be worth stooping for, there it lies in your eye ; if not, be it his that finds it.

[2] Mrs. Inchbald seems to have fallen into the common mistake of the character in some sensible observations, otherwise, upon this Comedy. 'It might be asked ', she says, 'whether this credulous steward was much deceived in imputing a degraded taste, in the sentiments of love, to his fair lady Olivia, as she actually did fall in love with a domestic ; and one, who, from his extreme youth, was perhaps a greater reproach to her discretion, than had she cast a tender regard upon her old and faithful servant.' But where does she gather the fact of his age ? Neither Maria nor Fabian ever cast that reproach upon him.

which could not have been, if she had not thought that this particular infirmity shaded some virtues. His rebuke to the knight, and his sottish revellers, is sensible and spirited; and when we take into consideration the unprotected condition of his mistress, and the strict regard with which her state of real or dissembled mourning would draw the eyes of the world upon her house-affairs, Malvolio might feel the honour of the family in some sort in his keeping; as it appears not that Olivia had any more brothers, or kinsmen, to look to it—for Sir Toby had dropped all such nice respects at the buttery hatch. That Malvolio was meant to be represented as possessing estimable qualities, the expression of the Duke in his anxiety to have him reconciled, almost infers. 'Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace.' Even in his abused state of chains and darkness, a sort of greatness seems never to desert him. He argues highly and well with the supposed Sir Topas, and philosophises gallantly upon his straw.[1] There must have been some shadow of worth about the man; he must have been something more than a mere vapour—a thing of straw, or Jack in office—before Fabian and Maria could have ventured sending him upon a courting-errand to Olivia. There was some consonancy (as he would say) in the undertaking, or the jest would have been too bold even for that house of misrule.

Bensley, accordingly, threw over the part an air of Spanish loftiness. He looked, spake, and moved like an old Castilian. He was starch, spruce, opinionated, but his superstructure of pride seemed bottomed upon a sense of worth. There was something in it beyond the coxcomb. It was big and swelling, but you could not be sure that it was hollow. You might wish to see it taken down, but

[1] *Clown*. What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?
Mal. That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.
Clown. What thinkest thou of his opinion?
Mal. I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve of his opinion.

you felt that it was upon an elevation. He was magnificent from the outset; but when the decent sobrieties of the character began to give way, and the poison of self-love, in his conceit of the Countess's affection, gradually to work, you would have thought that the hero of La Mancha in person stood before you. How he went smiling to himself! with what ineffable carelessness would he twirl his gold chain! what a dream it was! you were infected with the illusion, and did not wish that it should be removed! you had no room for laughter! if an unseasonable reflection of morality obtruded itself, it was a deep sense of the pitiable infirmity of man's nature, that can lay him open to such frenzies—but in truth you rather admired than pitied the lunacy while it lasted—you felt that an hour of such mistake was worth an age with the eyes open. Who would not wish to live but for a day in the conceit of such a lady's love as Olivia? Why, the Duke would have given his principality but for a quarter of a minute, sleeping or waking, to have been so deluded. The man seemed to tread upon air, to taste manna, to walk with his head in the clouds, to mate Hyperion. O! shake not the castles of his pride—endure yet for a season, bright moments of confidence—'stand still ye watches of the element,' that Malvolio may be still in fancy fair Olivia's lord—but fate and retribution say no—I hear the mischievous titter of Maria—the witty taunts of Sir Toby—the still more insupportable triumph of the foolish knight—the counterfeit Sir Topas is unmasked—and 'thus the whirligig of time', as the true clown hath it, 'brings in his revenges.' I confess that I never saw the catastrophe of this charactĕr, while Bensley played it, without a kind of tragic interest.

THE MIDDLE YEARS (1810–19)

No. 4 Inner Temple Lane

(To Manning, January 2, 1810.)

Dear Manning,—When I last wrote to you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner-Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them, but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous mode which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c. rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small, but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent cold, with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to 'Mrs. Leicester;' the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life; I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Doctor Tuthill. I con-

tinue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour; and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1. Mr. C. Lamb; 2. C. Lamb, Esq.; 3. Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4. Baron Lamb of Stamford;[1] 5. Viscount Lamb; 6. Earl Lamb; 7. Marquis Lamb; 8. Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing. Puns I have not made many, (nor punch much) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral, upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (Turkey in Europe, and Turkey in Asia,) that I can't jog on. It is New-year here. That is, it was New-year half-a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. . . .

While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root.

[1] Where my family come from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.

Home and Christendom

(To Southey, May 6, 1815.)

DEAR Southey,—I have received from Longman a copy of *Roderick*, with the author's compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way; the *Excursion*, Wordsworth's two last vols., and now *Roderick*, have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. . . . It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the *Joan of Arc*. It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than *Madoc*. I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs, or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travels, at least not farther than Paris, or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connexion as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, inn-keepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me, when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it; no need I hope yet.

On Presents, and a Prospect of Leisure

(To Wordsworth, Aug. 9, 1815.)

OUR panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning, almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c. There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*, be it fruit or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance, methinks, is too confined and strait-laced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend. Why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and through all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me; not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him any thing in return would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I know he meant a free-will offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome. . . .

You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which, I pray God, prove not fallacious. . . . If I do but get rid of auditing warehousekeepers' accounts, and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a lord of liberty I shall be! I shall dance, and skip, and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow, and throw 'em at rich men's night-caps, and talk blank verse, hoity, toity, and sing—'A clerk I was in London gay,' 'Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban,' like the emancipated monster, and go where I like,

up this street or down that alley. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck.

Good be to you all.

C. LAMB.

A Christmas Hoax

(To Manning, Dec. 25, 1815.)

DEAR old friend and absentee,—This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment, from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of 'Unto us a child'; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery—I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into

dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance: it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenny, whose first husband was Holcroft the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a ——, or a ——. For aught I see you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbrug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate church-yard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss ——, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed

your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before—poor Col., but two days before he died, he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the 'Wanderings of Cain,' in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefitted your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crips, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and for aught I know resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely, but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshal, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can.

C. Lamb.

Russell Street, Covent Garden

(To Dorothy Wordsworth, Nov. 21, 1817.)

DEAR Miss Wordsworth,—Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans, like mandrakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best, in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow-street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These incidents agreeably diversify a female life.

On Young W. W.

(To Dorothy Wordsworth, Nov. 25, 1819.)

DEAR Miss Wordsworth,—You will think me negligent; but I wanted to see more of Willy before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him,—*Virgilium tantum vidi*,—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart, and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant, nor bookworm; so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the 'natural sprouts of his own.' But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bons mots*, but the following are a few:—

Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked, that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least ; which was a touch of the comparative : but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist, he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question, as to the flux and reflux ; which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle, Mary,—who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day,—he sagely replied, 'Then it must come to the same thing at last ;' which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley ! The lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard; so impossible is it for Nature, in any of her works, to come up to the standard of a child's imagination ! The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead ; and, on particular inquiry, his old friend the ourang outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another, or none. But again, there was a golden eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative; for, being at play at tricktrack, (a kind of minor billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at,) not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, 'I cannot hit that beast.' Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term ; a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation ; a something where the two ends of the brute matter (ivory), and their human and rather violent personification into men, might meet, as I take it, illustrative of that excellent remark, in a certain preface about imagination, explaining 'Like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun

himself.' Not that I accuse William Minor of heriditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce.* Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him; for, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answered that he did not know!

It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn, or a temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid; nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation, in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly; as in the tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25, and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion; as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside; and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of skull, certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of Geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannered child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.

Your's, and yours' most sincerely,

C. Lamb.

Dedication of his Poems (1818): '*To S. T. Coleridge, Esq.*'

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

You will smile to see the slender labors of your friend designated by the title of *Works*; but such was the wish of the gentlemen who have kindly undertaken the trouble of collecting them, and from their judgment could be no appeal.

It would be a kind of disloyalty to offer to any one but yourself a volume containing the *early pieces*, which were first published among your poems, and were fairly derivatives from you and them. My friend Lloyd and myself came into our first battle (authorship is a sort of warfare) under cover of the greater Ajax. How this association, which shall always be a dear and proud recollection to me, came to be broken,—who snapped the three-fold cord,—whether yourself (but I know that was not the case) grew ashamed of your former companions,—or whether (which is by much the more probable) some ungracious bookseller was author of the separation,—I cannot tell;—but wanting the support of your friendly elm, (I speak for myself), my vine has, since that time, put forth few or no fruits; the sap (if ever it had any) has become, in a manner, dried up and extinct; and you will find your old associate, in his second volume, dwindled into prose and *criticism*.

Am I right in assuming this as the cause? or is it that, as years come upon us, (except with some more healthy-happy spirits,) Life itself loses much of its Poetry for us? we transcribe but what we read in the great volume of Nature; and, as the characters grow dim, we turn off, and look another way. You yourself write no Christabels, nor Ancient Mariners, now.

Some of the Sonnets, which shall be carelessly turned over by the general reader, may happily awaken in you

remembrances, which I should be sorry should be ever totally extinct—the memory

> Of summer days and of delightful years—

even so far back as to those old suppers at our old * * * * * * * Inn,—when life was fresh, and topics exhaustless, —and you first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry, and beauty, and kindliness.—

> What words have I heard
> Spoke at the Mermaid !

The world has given you many a shrewd nip and gird since that time, but either my eyes are grown dimmer, or my old friend is the *same*, who stood before me three and twenty years ago—his hair a little confessing the hand of time, but still shrouding the same capacious brain,—his heart not altered, scarcely where it 'alteration finds'.

One piece, Coleridge, I have ventured to publish in its original form, though I have heard you complain of a certain over-imitation of the antique in the style. If I could see any way of getting rid of the objection, without re-writing it entirely, I would make some sacrifices. But when I wrote John Woodvil, I never proposed to myself any distinct deviation from common English. I had been newly initiated in the writings of our elder dramatists; Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger, were then a *first love*; and from what I was so freshly conversant in, what wonder if my language imperceptibly took a tinge? The very *time*, which I have chosen for my story, that which immediately followed the Restoration, seemed to require in an English play, that the English should be of rather an older cast, than that of the precise year in which it happened to be written. I wish it had not some faults, which I can less vindicate than the language.

I remain,
My dear Coleridge,
Your's,
With unabated esteem,
C. LAMB.

ELIA (1820–5)

The South-Sea House

READER, in thy passage from the Bank—where thou hast been receiving thy half-yearly dividends (supposing thou art a lean annuitant like myself)—to the Flower Pot, to secure a place for Dalston, or Shacklewell, or some other thy suburban retreat northerly,—didst thou never observe a melancholy looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedle-street abuts upon Bishopsgate? I dare say thou hast often admired its magnificent portals ever gaping wide, and disclosing to view a grave court, with cloisters and pillars, with few or no traces of goers-in or comers-out—a desolation something like Balclutha's.[1]

This was once a house of trade,—a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here—the quick pulse of gain—and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled. Here are still to be seen stately porticos; imposing staircases; offices roomy as the state apartments in palaces—deserted, or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks; the still more sacred interiors of court and committee rooms, with venerable faces of beadles, door-keepers—directors seated in form on solemn days (to proclaim a dead dividend,) at long worm-eaten tables, that have been mahogany, with tarnished gilt-leather coverings, supporting massy silver inkstands long since dry;—the oaken wainscots hung with pictures of deceased governors and sub-governors, of Queen Anne, and the two first monarchs of the Brunswick dynasty;—huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated;—dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams,—and soundings of the Bay of Panama!—The long passages hung with buckets, appended in idle rows, to walls, whose substance might defy any,

[1] I passed by the walls of Balclutha, and they were desolate.—OSSIAN.

short of the last, conflagration :—with vast ranges of cellarage under all, where dollars and pieces of eight once lay, an 'unsunned heap', for Mammon to have solaced his solitary heart withal,—long since dissipated, or scattered into air at the blast of the breaking of that famous BUBBLE.——

Such is the SOUTH-SEA HOUSE. At least, such it was forty years ago, when I knew it,—a magnificent relic! What alterations may have been made in it since, I have had no opportunities of verifying. Time, I take for granted, has not freshened it. No wind has resuscitated the face of the sleeping waters. A thicker crust by this time stagnates upon it. The moths, that were then battening upon its obsolete ledgers and day-books, have rested from their depredations, but other light generations have succeeded, making fine fretwork among their single and double entries. Layers of dust have accumulated (a superfœtation of dirt!) upon the old layers, that seldom used to be disturbed, save by some curious finger, now and then, inquisitive to explore the mode of bookkeeping in Queen Anne's reign; or, with less hallowed curiosity, seeking to unveil some of the mysteries of that tremendous HOAX, whose extent the petty peculators of our day look back upon with the same expression of incredulous admiration, and hopeless ambition of rivalry, as would become the puny face of modern conspiracy contemplating the Titan size of Vaux's superhuman plot.

Peace to the manes of the BUBBLE! Silence and destitution are upon thy walls, proud house, for a memorial!

Situated as thou art, in the very heart of stirring and living commerce,—amid the fret and fever of speculation—with the Bank, and the 'Change, and the India-house about thee, in the hey-day of present prosperity, with their important faces, as it were, insulting thee, their *poor neighbour out of business*—to the idle and merely contemplative,—

to such as me, old house! there is a charm in thy quiet:—a cessation—a coolness from business—an indolence almost cloistral—which is delightful! With what reverence have I paced thy great bare rooms and courts at eventide! They spoke of the past:—the shade of some dead accountant, with visionary pen in ear, would flit by me, stiff as in life. Living accounts and accountants puzzle me. I have no skill in figuring. But thy great dead tomes, which scarce three degenerate clerks of the present day could lift from their enshrining shelves—with their old fantastic flourishes and decorative rubric interlacings—their sums in triple columniations, set down with formal superfluity of cyphers—with pious sentences at the beginning, without which our religious ancestors never ventured to open a book of business, or bill of lading—the costly vellum covers of some of them almost persuading us that we are got into some *better library*,—are very agreeable and edifying spectacles. I can look upon these defunct dragons with complacency. Thy heavy odd-shaped ivory-handled pen-knives (our ancestors had every thing on a larger scale than we have hearts for) are as good as any thing from Herculaneum. The pounce-boxes of our days have gone retrograde.

The very clerks which I remember in the South-Sea House—I speak of forty years back—had an air very different from those in the public offices that I have had to do with since. They partook of the genius of the place!

They were mostly (for the establishment did not admit of superfluous salaries) bachelors. Generally (for they had not much to do) persons of a curious and speculative turn of mind. Old-fashioned, for a reason mentioned before. Humorists, for they were of all descriptions; and, not having been brought together in early life (which has a tendency to assimilate the members of corporate bodies to each other), but, for the most part, placed in this house

in ripe or middle age, they necessarily carried into it their separate habits and oddities, unqualified, if I may so speak, as into a common stock. Hence they formed a sort of Noah's ark. Odd fishes. A lay-monastery. Domestic retainers in a great house, kept more for show than use. Yet pleasant fellows, full of chat—and not a few among them had arrived at considerable proficiency on the German flute.

The cashier at that time was one Evans, a Cambro-Briton. He had something of the choleric complexion of his countrymen stamped on his visage, but was a worthy sensible man at bottom. He wore his hair, to the last, powdered and frizzed out, in the fashion which I remember to have seen in caricatures of what were termed, in my young days, *Maccaronies*. He was the last of that race of beaux. Melancholy as a gib-cat over his counter all the forenoon, I think I see him, making up his cash (as they call it) with tremulous fingers, as if he feared every one about him was a defaulter; in his hypochondry ready to imagine himself one; haunted, at least, with the idea of the possibility of his becoming one: his tristful visage clearing up a little over his roast neck of veal at Anderton's at two (where his picture still hangs, taken a little before his death by desire of the master of the coffee-house, which he had frequented for the last five-and-twenty years), but not attaining the meridian of its animation till evening brought on the hour of tea and visiting. The simultaneous sound of his well-known rap at the door with the stroke of the clock announcing six, was a topic of never-failing mirth in the families which this dear old bachelor gladdened with his presence. Then was his *forte*, his glorified hour! How would he chirp, and expand, over a muffin! How would he dilate into secret history! His countryman, Pennant himself, in particular, could not be more eloquent than he in relation to old and new London—the site of old theatres,

churches, streets gone to decay—where Rosamond's pond stood—the Mulberry-gardens—and the Conduit in Cheap—with many a pleasant anecdote, derived from paternal tradition, of those grotesque figures which Hogarth has immortalized in his picture of *Noon*,—the worthy descendants of those historic confessors, who, flying to this country, from the wrath of Louis the Fourteenth and his dragoons, kept alive the flame of pure religion in the sheltering obscurities of Hog-lane, and the vicinity of the Seven Dials!

Deputy, under Evans, was Thomas Tame. He had the air and stoop of a nobleman. You would have taken him for one, had you met him in one of the passages leading to Westminster-hall. By stoop, I mean that gentle bending of the body forwards, which, in great men, must be supposed to be the effect of an habitual condescending attention to the applications of their inferiors. While he held you in converse, you felt strained to the height in the colloquy. The conference over, you were at leisure to smile at the comparative insignificance of the pretensions which had just awed you. His intellect was of the shallowest order. It did not reach to a saw or a proverb. His mind was in its original state of white paper. A sucking babe might have posed him. What was it then? Was he rich? Alas, no! Thomas Tame was very poor. Both he and his wife looked outwardly gentlefolks, when I fear all was not well at all times within. She had a neat meagre person, which it was evident she had not sinned in over-pampering; but in its veins was noble blood. She traced her descent, by some labyrinth of relationship, which I never thoroughly understood,—much less can explain with any heraldic certainty at this time of day,—to the illustrious, but unfortunate house of Derwentwater. This was the secret of Thomas's stoop. This was the thought—the sentiment—the bright solitary star of your lives,—ye mild and happy pair,—which cheered you in the night of intellect, and in the

obscurity of your station! This was to you instead of riches, instead of rank, instead of glittering attainments: and it was worth them all together. You insulted none with it; but, while you wore it as a piece of defensive armour only, no insult likewise could reach you through it. *Decus et solamen.*

Of quite another stamp was the then accountant, John Tipp. He neither pretended to high blood, nor in good truth cared one fig about the matter. He 'thought an accountant the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest accountant in it'. Yet John was not without his hobby. The fiddle relieved his vacant hours. He sang, certainly, with other notes than to the Orphean lyre. He did, indeed, scream and scrape most abominably. His fine suite of official rooms in Threadneedle-street, which without any thing very substantial appended to them, were enough to enlarge a man's notions of himself that lived in them, (I know not who is the occupier of them now) resounded fortnightly to the notes of a concert of 'sweet breasts', as our ancestors would have called them, culled from club-rooms and orchestras—chorus singers—first and second violoncellos—double basses—and clarionets—who ate his cold mutton, and drank his punch, and praised his ear. He sate like Lord Midas among them. But at the desk Tipp was quite another sort of creature. Thence all ideas, that were purely ornamental, were banished. You could not speak of any thing romantic without rebuke. Politics were excluded. A newspaper was thought too refined and abstracted. The whole duty of man consisted in writing off dividend warrants. The striking of the annual balance in the company's books (which, perhaps, differed from the balance of last year in the sum of 25*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.*, occupied his days and nights for a month previous. Not that Tipp was blind to the deadness of *things* (as they call them in the city) in his beloved house, or did not sigh for

a return of the old stirring days when South Sea hopes were young—(he was indeed equal to the wielding of any the most intricate accounts of the most flourishing company in these or those days) :—but to a genuine accountant the difference of proceeds is as nothing. The fractional farthing is as dear to his heart as the thousands which stand before it. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was every thing. His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a ruler. His pen was not less erring than his heart. He made the best executor in the world : he was plagued with incessant executorships accordingly, which excited his spleen and soothed his vanity in equal ratios. He would swear (for Tipp swore) at the little orphans, whose rights he would guard with a tenacity like the grasp of the dying hand, that commended their interests to his protection. With all this there was about him a sort of timidity—(his few enemies used to give it a worse name)—a something which, in reverence to the dead, we will place, if you please, a little on this side of the heroic. Nature certainly had been pleased to endow John Tipp with a sufficient measure of the principle of self-preservation. There is a cowardice which we do not despise, because it has nothing base or treacherous in its elements ; it betrays itself, not you : it is mere temperament ; the absence of the romantic and the enterprising ; it sees a lion in the way, and will not, with Fortinbras, 'greatly find quarrel in a straw,' when some supposed honour is at stake. Tipp never mounted the box of a stage-coach in his life ; or leaned against the rails of a balcony ; or walked upon the ridge of a parapet ; or looked down a precipice ; or let off a gun ; or went upon a water-party ; or would willingly let you go if he could have helped it : neither was it recorded of him, that for lucre, or for intimidation, he ever forsook friend or principle.

Whom next shall we summon from the dusty dead, in whom common qualities become uncommon? Can I forget thee, Henry Man, the wit, the polished man of letters, the *author*, of the South-Sea House? who never enteredst thy office in a morning or quittedst it in mid-day—(what didst *thou* in an office?)—without some quirk that left a sting! Thy gibes and thy jokes are now extinct, or survive but in two forgotten volumes, which I had the good fortune to rescue from a stall in Barbican, not three days ago, and found thee terse, fresh, epigrammatic, as alive. Thy wit is a little gone by in these fastidious days—thy topics are staled by the 'new-born gauds' of the time:—but great thou used to be in Public Ledgers, and in Chronicles, upon Chatham, and Shelburne, and Rockingham, and Howe, and Burgoyne, and Clinton, and the war which ended in the tearing from Great Britain her rebellious colonies,—and Keppel, and Wilkes, and Sawbridge, and Bull, and Dunning, and Pratt, and Richmond,—and such small politics.—

A little less facetious, and a great deal more obstreperous, was fine rattling, rattleheaded Plumer. He was descended,—not in a right line, reader, (for his lineal pretensions, like his personal, favoured a little of the sinister bend) from the Plumers of Hertfordshire. So tradition gave him out; and certain family features not a little sanctioned the opinion. Certainly old Walter Plumer (his reputed author) had been a rake in his days, and visited much in Italy, and had seen the world. He was uncle, bachelor-uncle, to the fine old whig still living, who has represented the county in so many successive parliaments, and has a fine old mansion near Ware. Walter flourished in George the Second's days, and was the same who was summoned before the House of Commons about a business of franks, with the old Duchess of Marlborough. You may read of it in Johnson's *Life of Cave*. Cave came off cleverly in that business. It is

certain our Plumer did nothing to discountenance the rumour. He rather seemed pleased whenever it was, with all gentleness, insinuated. But, besides his family pretensions, Plumer was an engaging fellow, and sang gloriously.—

Not so sweetly sang Plumer as thou sangest, mild, child-like, pastoral M— ; a flute's breathing less divinely whispering than thy Arcadian melodies, when, in tones worthy of Arden, thou didst chant that song sung by Amiens to the banished Duke, which proclaims the winter wind more lenient than for a man to be ungrateful. Thy sire was old surly M—, the unapproachable churchwarden of Bishopsgate. He knew not what he did, when he begat thee, like spring, gentle offspring of blustering winter :—only unfortunate in thy ending, which should have been mild, conciliatory, swan-like.—

Much remains to sing. Many fantastic shapes rise up, but they must be mine in private :—already I have fooled the reader to the top of his bent ;—else could I omit that strange creature Woollett, who existed in trying the question, and *bought litigations* ?—and still stranger, inimitable solemn Hepworth, from whose gravity Newton might have deduced the law of gravitation. How profoundly would he nib a pen—with what deliberation would he wet a wafer !—

But it is time to close—night's wheels are rattling fast over me—it is proper to have done with this solemn mockery.

Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all this while—peradventure the very *names*, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic—insubstantial—like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece :—

Be satisfied that something answering to them has had a being. Their importance is from the past.

Oxford in the Vacation

CASTING a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article—as the wary connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not,) never fails to consult the *quis sculpsit* in the corner, before he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollet —methinks I hear you exclaim, Reader, *Who is Elia?*

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humours of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of business, long since gone to decay, doubtless you have already set me down in your mind as one of the self-same college—a votary of the desk—a notched and cropt scrivener—one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

Well, I do agnize something of the sort. I confess that it is my humour, my fancy—in the forepart of the day, when the mind of your man of letters requires some relaxation—(and none better than such as at first sight seems most abhorrent from his beloved studies)—to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos, cottons, raw silks, piece-goods, flowered or otherwise. In the first place * * * * * * * and then it sends you home with such increased appetite to your books * * * * * not to say, that your outside sheets, and waste wrappers of foolscap, do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression of sonnets, epigrams, *essays*—so that the very parings of a counting-house are, in some sort, the settings up of an author. The enfranchised quill, that has plodded all the morning among the cart-rucks of figures and cyphers, frisks and curvets so at its ease over the flowery carpet-ground of a midnight dissertation.—It feels its promotion. * * * * * So that you see, upon the whole, the literary dignity of *Elia* is very little, if at all, compromised in the condescension.

Not that in my anxious detail of the many commodities incidental to the life of a public office, I would be thought blind to certain flaws, which a cunning carper might be able to pick in this Joseph's vest. And here I must have leave, in the fulness of my soul, to regret the abolition, and doing-away-with altogether, of those consolatory interstices, and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons,—the *red-letter days*, now become, to all intents and purposes, *dead-letter days*. There was Paul, and Stephen, and Barnabas—

Andrew and John, men famous in old times

—we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old *Baskett* Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture—holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti.—I honoured them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot—so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred:—only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the *better Jude* with Simon—clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together, to make up one poor gaudy-day between them—as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life—'far off their coming shone.'—I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's-day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded

——but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority—— I am plain Elia—no Selden nor Archbishop Usher—though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with *ours*. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted *ad eundem*. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for *me*. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments, I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers in spectacles, drop a bow or curtsy, as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favours the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a seraphic Doctor.

The walks at these times are so much one's own,—the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted, and with open doors, inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a devoir to some Founder, or noble or royal Benefactress (that should have been ours) whose portrait seems to smile upon their over-looked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality: the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fire-places, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for

Chaucer! Not the meanest minister among the dishes but is hallowed to me through his imagination, and the Cook goes forth a Manciple.

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art every thing! When thou *wert*, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter *antiquity*, as thou called'st it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, *modern!* What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses[1] are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being every thing! the past is every thing, being nothing!

What were thy *dark ages?* Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning. Why is it that we can never hear mention of them without an accompanying feeling, as though a palpable obscure had dimmed the face of things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping!

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers, that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS. Those *variæ lectiones*, so tempting to the more erudite palates, do but disturb and unsettle my faith.

[1] Januses of one face.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

I am no Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses might have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curiosities to Porson, and to G. D.—whom, by the way, I found busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in Russia, and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. No inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend, is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford's-inn——where, like a dove on the asp's nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorneys' clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits, 'in calm and sinless peace.' The fangs of the law pierce him not—the winds of litigation blow over his humble chambers—the hard sheriff's officer moves his hat as he passes—legal nor illegal discourtesy touches him—none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him—you would as soon 'strike an abstract idea'.

D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matter connected with the two Universities; and has lately hit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C——, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points—particularly that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardor with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here, or at C——.' Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than any body else about these questions.—Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewomen's years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent—unreverend. They have their

good glebe lands *in manu*, and care not much to rake into the title-deeds. I gather at least so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroke heifer, when I interrupted him. *A priori* it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D. would have done the same, had I accosted him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford's-inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provoking short-sightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil) D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other morning at our friend *M.*'s in Bedford-square; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with great exactitude of purpose he enters me his name in the book—which ordinarily lies about in such places, to record the failures of the untimely or unfortunate visitor—and takes his leave with many ceremonies, and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned him into the same neighbourhood again, and again the quiet image of the fire-side circle at *M.*'s—Mrs. *M.* presiding at it like a Queen Lar, with pretty *A. S.* at her side—striking irresistibly on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were 'certainly not to return from the country before that day week') and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before: again the book is brought, and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script)—his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate!—The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

For with G. D.—to be absent from the body, is sometimes (not to speak it profanely) to be present with the Lord. At the very time when, personally encountering thee, he

passes on with no recognition——or, being stopped, starts like a thing surprised—at that moment, reader, he is on Mount Tabor—or Parnassus—or co-sphered with Plato—or, with Harrington, framing 'immortal commonwealths'—devising some plan of amelioration to thy country, or thy species——peradventure meditating some individual kindness or courtesy, to be done to *thee thyself*, the returning consciousness of which made him to start so guiltily at thy obtruded personal presence.

D. is delightful any where, but he is at the best in such places as these. He cares not much for Bath. He is out of his element at Buxton, at Scarborough, or Harrowgate. The Cam and the Isis are to him 'better than all the waters of Damascus'. On the Muses' hill he is happy, and good, as one of the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; and when he goes about with you to show you the halls and colleges, you think you have with you the Interpreter at the House Beautiful.

New Year's Eve

. . . Of all sounds of all bells—(bells, the music nighest bordering upon heaven)—most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the Old Year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected—in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies. It takes a personal colour; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed—

I saw the skirts of the departing Year.

It is no more than what in sober sadness every one of us seems to be conscious of, in that awful leave-taking.

I am sure I felt it, and all felt it with me, last night; though some of my companions affected rather to manifest an exhilaration at the birth of the coming year, than any very tender regrets for the decease of its predecessor. But I am none of those who—

Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.

I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years,—from some mental twist which makes it difficult in me to face the prospective. I have almost ceased to hope; and am sanguine only in the prospects of other (former) years. I plunge into foregone visions and conclusions. I encounter pell-mell with past disappointments. I am armour-proof against old discouragements. I forgive, or overcome in fancy, old adversaries. I play over again *for love*, as the gamesters phrase it, games, for which I once paid so dear. I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. Methinks, it is better that I should have pined away seven of my goldenest years, when I was thrall to the fair hair, and fairer eyes, of Alice W——n, than that so passionate a love-adventure should be lost. It was better that our family should have missed that legacy, which old Dorrell cheated us of, than that I should have at this moment two thousand pounds *in banco*, and be without the idea of that specious old rogue.

In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days. Do I advance a paradox, when I say, that, skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love *himself*, without the imputation of self-love?

If I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective—and mine is painfully so—can have a less respect for his present identity, than I have for the man Elia.

I know him to be light, and vain, and humorsome; a notorious * * *; addicted to * * * *: averse from counsel, neither taking it, nor offering it;—* * * besides; a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on, and spare not; I subscribe to it all, and much more, than thou canst be willing to lay at his door———but for the child Elia—that 'other me,' there, in the back-ground—I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master—with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient small-pox at five and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least colour of falsehood.—God help thee, Elia, how art thou changed! Thou art sophisticated.—I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was—how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful! From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself,—and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpractised steps, and regulate the tone of my moral being!

That I am fond of indulging, beyond a hope of sympathy, in such retrospection, may be the symptom of some sickly idiosyncrasy. Or is it owing to another cause; simply, that being without wife or family, I have not learned to project myself enough out of myself; and having no offspring of my own to dally with, I turn back upon memory, and adopt my own early idea, as my heir and favourite? If these speculations seem fantastical to thee, reader—(a busy man, perchance), if I tread out of the way of thy sympathy, and am singularly-conceited only, I retire, impenetrable to ridicule, under the phantom cloud of Elia.

The elders, with whom I was brought up, were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the Old Year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar ceremony. —In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess a truth?—I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like miser's farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away 'like a weaver's shuttle'. Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends: to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.—Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not

rooted up without blood. They do not willingly seek Lavinian shores. A new state of being staggers me.

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle light, and fire-side conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and *irony itself*—do these things go out with life ?

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him ?

And you, my midnight darlings, my Folios ! must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embraces? Must knowledge come to me, if it comes at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading ?

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here,—the recognisable face—the ' sweet assurance of a look '— ? . . .

Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist

' A CLEAR fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game.' This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God) who, next to her devotions, loved a good game at whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want to make up a rubber ; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning ; that they like to win one game, and lose another ; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no ; and will desire an adversary, who has slipt a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said, that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul; and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) 'like a dancer'. She sate bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side—their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards: and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do,—and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards—over a book.

Pope was her favourite author: his *Rape of the Lock* her favourite work. She once did me the favour to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of

Ombre in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, tradrille. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles: but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors;—the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille—absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter give him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the Aces;—the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone:—above all, the overpowering attractions of a *Sans Prendre Vole*,—to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist;—all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the *solider* game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not, like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel; perpetually changing postures and connexions; bitter foes to-day, sugared darlings to-morrow; kissing and scratching in a breath;—but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational, antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favourite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage—nothing superfluous. No *flushes*—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up:—that any one should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and colour, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the colours of things,—Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them: but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled—never to take the field?—She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind, would have stript it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps?—Why two colours, when the mark of the suits would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?—

'But the eye, my dear Madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not a creature of pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your quaker spirit of unsensualizing would have kept out.—You, yourself, have a pretty collection of paintings—but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the ante-room, you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight, at all comparable to *that* you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assort-

ment of the court cards?—the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession—the gay triumph-assuring scarlets —the contrasting deadly-killing sables—the "hoary majesty of spades"—Pam in all his glory!—

'All these might be dispensed with; and, with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well, picture-less. But the *beauty* of cards would be extinguished for ever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling.—Imagine a dull deal board, or drum head, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature's), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and turneys in!—Exchange those delicately-turned ivory markers—(work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol,—or as profanely slighting their true application as the arrantest Ephesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess)—exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestor's money) or chalk and a slate!'—

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness of my logic; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favourite topic that evening, I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a curious cribbage board, made of the finest Sienna marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence:—this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds, came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say,—disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce '*go*'—or '*that's a go.*' She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber

(a five dollar stake), because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring '*two for his heels*'. There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms—such as pique—repique—the capot—they savoured (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus:—Cards are warfare: the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war, in disguise of a sport: when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money; he cares not for your luck *sympathetically*, or for your play.—Three are still worse; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille.—But in square games (*she meant whist*) all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honour, common to every species—though the *latter* can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theatre to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested—by-stander wit-

nesses it, but because your *partner* sympathises in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game.—By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favourite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, *for nothing*. Chance, she would argue—and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion!—chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious, that cannot be *glory*. What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending?—Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number—and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively, without a prize?—Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of over-reaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit,—his memory, or combination-faculty rather—against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless.—She could not conceive a *game* wanting the spritely infusion of chance,—the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room, whilst whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with

insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles, and Knights, the *imagery* of the board, she would argue, (and I think in this case justly) were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard head-contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other:—that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards; that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado; great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends; quite as diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play, without esteeming them to be such.——

With great deference to the old lady's judgment on these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life, when playing at cards *for nothing* has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet *for love* with my cousin Bridget—Bridget Elia.

I grant there is something sneaking in it; but with a tooth-ache, or a sprained ancle,—when you are subdued and humble,—you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as *sick whist*.—

I grant it is not the highest style of man—I deprecate

the manes of Sarah Battle—she lives not, alas! to whom I should apologise.—

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible.—I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)—(dare I tell thee, how foolish I am?)—I wished it might have lasted for ever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play: I would be content to go on in that idle folly for ever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over: and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

The Old and the New Schoolmaster

My reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays, and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions, and ways of feeling. In every thing that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in king John's days. I know less geography than a school-boy of six week's standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into 'Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy.

I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe, that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first* in my fancy. I make the widest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend *M.*, with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have 'small Latin and less Greek'. I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers—not from the circumstance of my being town-born—for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it 'on Devon's leafy shores',—and am no less at a loss among purely town-objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes.—Not that I affect ignorance—but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder, how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world, as I have done, upon so meagre a stock. But the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; every body is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. (But

in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling. The truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much, as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me. I lately got into a dilemma of this sort.—

In one of my daily jaunts between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell, the coach stopped to take up a staid-looking gentleman, about the wrong side of thirty, who was giving his parting directions (while the steps were adjusting), in a tone of mild authority, to a tall youth, who seemed to be neither his clerk, his son, nor his servant, but something partaking of all three. The youth was dismissed, and we drove on. As we were the sole passengers, he naturally enough addressed his conversations to me; and we discussed the merits of the fare, the civility and punctuality of the driver; the circumstance of an opposition coach having been lately set up, with the probabilities of its success—to all which I was enabled to return pretty satisfactory answers, having been drilled into this kind of etiquette by some years' daily practice of riding to and fro in the stage aforesaid—when he suddenly alarmed me by a startling question, whether I had seen the show of prize cattle that morning in Smithfield? Now as I had not seen it, and do not greatly care for such sort of exhibitions, I was obliged to return a cold negative. He seemed a little mortified, as well as astonished, at my declaration, as (it appeared) he was just come fresh from the sight and doubtless had hoped to compare notes on the subject. However he assured me that I had lost a fine treat, as it far exceeded the show of last year. We were now approaching Norton Falgate, when the sight of some shop-goods *ticketed* freshened him up into a dissertation upon the cheapness of cottons this spring. I was now a little in heart, as the nature of my morning avocations had brought me into some sort of familiarity with the raw material;

and I was surprised to find how eloquent I was becoming on the state of the India market—when, presently, he dashed my incipient vanity to the earth at once, by inquiring whether I had ever made any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London. Had he asked of me, what song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might, with Sir Thomas Browne, have hazarded a 'wide solution.'[1] My companion saw my embarrassment, and, the almshouses beyond Shoreditch just coming in view, with great good-nature and dexterity shifted his conversation to the subject of public charities; which led to the comparative merits of provision for the poor in past and present times, with observations on the old monastic institutions, and charitable orders;—but, finding me rather dimly impressed with some glimmering notions from old poetic associations, than strongly fortified with any speculations reducible to calculation on the subject, he gave the matter up; and, the country beginning to open more and more upon us, as we approached the turnpike at Kingsland (the destined termination of his journey), he put a home thrust upon me, in the most unfortunate position he could have chosen, by advancing some queries relative to the North Pole Expedition. While I was muttering out something about the Panorama of those strange regions (which I had actually seen), by way of parrying the question, the coach stopping relieved me from any further apprehensions. My companion getting out, left me in the comfortable possession of my ignorance; and I heard him, as he went off, putting questions to an outside passenger, who had alighted with him, regarding an epidemic disorder, that had been rife about Dalston; and which, my friend assured him, had gone through five or six schools in that neighbourhood. The truth now flashed upon me, that my

[1] Urn Burial.

companion was a schoolmaster; and that the youth, whom he had parted from at our first acquaintance, must have been one of the bigger boys, or the usher.—He was evidently a kind-hearted man, who did not seem so much desirous of provoking a discussion by the questions which he put, as of obtaining information at any rate. It did not appear that he took any interest, either, in such kind of inquiries, for their own sake; but that he was in some way bound to seek for knowledge. A greenish-coloured coat, which he had on, forbade me to surmise that he was a clergyman. The adventure gave birth to some reflections on the difference between persons of his profession in past and present times.

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres: who believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori* and their *Spici-legia*; in Arcadia still, but kings; the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to king Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward Tyro, serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa, or a clown Damætas!

With what a savour doth the Preface to Colet's, or (as it is sometimes called) Paul's Accidence, set forth! 'To

exhort every man to the learning of grammar, that intendeth to attain the understanding of the tongues, wherein is contained a great treasury of wisdom and knowledge, it would seem but vain and lost labour; for so much as it is known, that nothing can surely be ended, whose beginning is either feeble or faulty; and no building be perfect, whereas the foundation and ground-work is ready to fall, and unable to uphold the burden of the frame.' How well doth this stately preamble (comparable to those which Milton commendeth as 'having been the usage to prefix to some solemn law, then first promulgated by Solon, or Lycurgus') correspond with and illustrate that pious zeal for conformity, expressed in a succeeding clause, which would fence about grammar-rules with the severity of faith-articles!—'as for the diversity of grammars, it is well profitably taken away by the King's Majesties wisdom, who foreseeing the inconvenience, and favourably providing the remedie, caused one kind of grammar by sundry learned men to be diligently drawn, and so to be set out, only everywhere to be taught for the use of learners, and for the hurt in changing of schoolmaisters.' What a *gusto* in that which follows: 'wherein it is profitable that he can orderly decline his noun, and his verb.' *His* noun!

The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules.

The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of every thing, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of any thing. He must be superficially, if I may say so, omniscient. He is to know something of pneumatics; of chemistry; of whatever is curious, or proper to excite the attention of the youthful mind; an insight into mechanics is desirable, with a touch of statistics; the quality of soils, &c. botany, the constitution of his country, *cum multis aliis*. You may get a notion of some

part of his expected duties by consulting the famous Tractate on Education addressed to Mr. Hartlib.

All these things—these, or the desire of them—he is expected to instil, not by set lessons from professors, which he may charge in the bill, but at school-intervals, as he walks the streets, or saunters through green fields (those natural instructors), with his pupils. The least part of what is expected from him, is to be done in school-hours. He must insinuate knowledge at the *mollia tempora fandi*. He must seize every occasion—the season of the year—the time of the day—a passing cloud—a rainbow—a waggon of hay—a regiment of soldiers going by—to inculcate something useful. He can receive no pleasure from a casual glimpse of Nature, but must catch at it as an object of instruction. He must interpret beauty into the picturesque. He cannot relish a beggar-man, or a gipsy, for thinking of the suitable improvement. Nothing comes to him, not spoiled by the sophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe—that Great Book, as it has been called—is to him indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book, out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys.—Vacations themselves are none to him, he is only rather worse off than before; for commonly he has some intrusive upper-boy fastened upon him at such times; some cadet of a great family; some neglected lump of nobility, or gentry; that he must drag after him to the play, to the Panorama, to Mr. Bartley's Orrery, to the Panopticon, or into the country, to a friend's house, or to his favourite watering-place. Wherever he goes, this uneasy shadow attends him. A boy is at his board, and in his path, and in all his movements. He is boy-rid, sick of perpetual boy.

Boys are capital fellows in their own way, among their mates; but they are unwholesome companions for grown people. The restraint is felt no less on the one side, than

on the other.—Even a child, that 'plaything for an hour', tires *always*. The noises of children, playing their own fancies—as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell—by distance made more sweet—inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so—for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation.—I should but spoil their sport, and diminish my own sympathy for them, by mingling in their pastime....

A Character of Bridget Elia

(From the Essay on Mackery End.)

Bridget Elia has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as 'with a difference'. We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood, than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale, or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teazes me.

I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—the oddities of authorship please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of any thing that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her, that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She 'holds Nature more clever'. I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the Religio Medici; but she must apologise to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favourite of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous,—but again somewhat fantastical, and original-brain'd, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances, it turns out, that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let alone; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of conviction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman witn a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company: at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter; but in the teazing accidents, and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

Dream-Children; A Reverie

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C's.

tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, 'that would be foolish indeed.' And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said 'those innocents would do her no harm'; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out

hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken pannels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but

had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes) rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before

me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name'——and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

A Dissertation upon Roast Pig

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion

till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from ?—not from the burnt cottage —he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crums of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion,

when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

'You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?'

'O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats.'

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out 'Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord',—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript

here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or móney. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing

took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.——

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *præludium*, of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is doing—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

> Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care—

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coalheaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of Sapors. 'Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful.

yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lover's kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbour's fare.

I am one of those, who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in my own. 'Presents', I often say, 'endear Absents.' Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chicken (those 'tame villatic fowl'), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, 'give every thing.' I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightingly, (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate.—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweet-meat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their methods of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what

effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto—

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, 'Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?' I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crums, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

Old China

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing senti-

ment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

'I wish the good old times would come again', she said, 'when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;'—so she was pleased to ramble on,—'in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

'Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bed-wards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumber-some—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich

and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that over-worn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

'When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the "Lady Blanch"; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

'Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday—holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savoury cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess, as Isaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order

the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

'You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to women recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we

saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

'There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

'I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort and another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now,) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with "lusty brimmers" (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called

him), we used to welcome in the "coming guest". Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.'

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. 'It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fire-side, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair-cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those

anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe,* which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Crœsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house.'

The Superannuated Man

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. VIRGIL.

A Clerk I was in London gay.
O'KEEFE.

IF peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant play-time, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partly reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had

a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thraldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening

of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose

after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavily upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in by-gone winters. I walk, read or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

> ———That's born, and has his years come to him,
> In some green desart.

'Years,' you will say! 'what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us, he is past fifty.'

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow.

For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me three-fold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks, with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:

————'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——l take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not,—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils

for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know, that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplies the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my 'works!' There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where

I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in a morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fenchurch-street? Stones of old Mincing-lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday night's sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holyday as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holyday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over

him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

> As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer * * * * * *, clerk to the Firm of &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating, at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est.* I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

Character of the late Elia, by a Friend

MY late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the

severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure —irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred.—He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he had been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but nine times out of ten, he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested.—Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *literati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged

regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments, which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statist!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness, which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtseyed, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. 'They take me for a visiting governor,' he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it

was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

LATER YEARS (1822-34)

The Drudgery of the Desk

(To Wordsworth, March 20, 1822.)

I GROW ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls, without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential clerk-faces always in one's dish. O for a few years between the grave and the desk! . . . I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry; —*Otium cum indignitate.* I had thought in a green age (O green thought!) to have retired to Ponder's End, emblematic name, how beautiful! in the Ware Road, there to have made up my accounts with heaven and the company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt, anon stretching, on some fine Isaac Walton morning, to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar; but walking, walking ever till I fairly walked myself off my legs, dying walking! The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day

(but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me.

After a Holiday

(To Bernard Barton, July 10, 1823.)

Dear Sir,—I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet awhile; *home is the most unforgiving of friends, and always resents absence*; I know its old cordial looks will return, but they are slow in clearing up. That is one of the features of this our galley-slavery, that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings; and just as I had learned to domiciliate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots, inland bays, &c., which realise the notions of Juan Fernandez. The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country church, (by whom or when built unknown,) standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it through beautiful woods to so many farm-houses. There it stands like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation; or like a hermit's oratory (the hermit dead), or a mausoleum; its effects singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image: you must make out a vicar and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there; yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all the seemly additaments of *our* worship.

Southey has attacked 'Elia' on the score of infidelity, in the Quarterly article, 'Progress of Infidelity.' He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion; but I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I hate his review, and his being a reviewer. The hint he has dropped will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before. Let it stop,—there is corn in Egypt while there is cash at Leadenhall! You and I are something besides being writers, thank God!

Yours truly,

C. L.

Gardening at Colebrook

(To Bernard Barton, Sept. 2, 1823.)

DEAR B. B.—What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. When you come Londonward, you will find me no longer in Covent Garden; I have a cottage in Colebrook Row, Islington;—a cottage, for it is detached; a white house, with six good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden, with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books; and above is a lightsome drawing-room, three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great lord, never having had a house before.

The 'London,' I fear, falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat; it will topple down if they don't get some buttresses. They have pulled down three; Hazlitt, Proctor, and their best stay, kind,

light-hearted W——, their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concerned in it.

I heard of you from Mr. P—— this morning, and that gave a fillip to my laziness, which has been intolerable; but I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gathered my jargonels, but my Windsor pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of *father Adam*. I recognise the paternity, while I watch my tulips. I almost feel with him too; for the first day I turned a drunken gardener (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, &c. which hung over from a neighbour's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talked of the law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy 'garden state!'

I hope you transmitted the Fox Journal to its owner, with suitable thanks. Pray accept this for a letter, and believe me with sincere regards,

Yours,

C. L.

In the Album of Lucy Barton

(1824.)

Little Book, surnamed of *white*,
Clean as yet, and fair to sight,
Keep thy attribution right.

Never disproportiôn'd scrawl:
Ugly blot, that's worse than all;
On thy maiden clearness fall!

In each letter, here design'd,
Let the reader emblem'd find
Neatness of the owner's mind.

Gilded margins count a sin,
Let thy leaves attraction win
By the golden rules within;

Sayings fetch'd from sages old;
Laws which Holy Writ unfold,
Worthy to be graved in gold:

Lighter fancies not excluding;
Blameless wit, with nothing rude in,
Sometimes mildly interluding

Amid strains of graver measure:
Virtue's self hath oft her pleasure
In sweet Muses' groves of leisure.

Riddles dark, perplexing sense;
Darker meanings of offence;
What but *shades*—be banished hence.

Whitest thoughts in whitest dress,
Candid meanings, best express
Mind of quiet Quakeress.

On his Release from the India House

(To Wordsworth, April 6, 1825.)

I CAME home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.* to have three times as much real time—time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the

nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys, with their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

The Death of Randall Norris

(To Crabb Robinson, Jan. 20, 1827.)

DEAR Robinson,—I called upon you this morning, and found you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not; or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed or about it were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters

he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down, and told me that—'in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling;' and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended; but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes, and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
In spite of the devil, and Brussels Gazette!

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the *Brussels Gazette* now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. 'How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?'

On Monuments to Goodness

(To Mrs. Basil Montagu, Summer, 1827.)

Dear Madam,—I return your list with my name. I should be sorry that any respect should be going on towards Clarkson, and I be left out of the conspiracy. Otherwise, I frankly own that to pillarize a man's good feelings in his life-time is not to my taste. Monuments

to goodness, even after death, are equivocal. I turn away from Howard's, I scarce know why. Goodness blows no trumpet, nor desires to have it blown. *We should be modest for a modest man*—as he is for himself. The vanities of life—art, poetry, skill military—are subjects for trophies; not the silent thoughts arising in a good man's mind in lonely places. Was I Clarkson, I should never be able to walk or ride near the spot again. Instead of bread, we are giving him a stone. Instead of the locality recalling the noblest moment of his existence, it is a place at which his friends (that is, himself) blow to the world, 'What a good man is he!' I sate down upon a hillock at Forty Hill yesternight,—a fine contemplative evening,—with a thousand good speculations about mankind. How I yearned with cheap benevolence! I shall go and inquire of the stone-cutter, that cuts the tombstones here, what a stone with a short inscription will cost; just to say, 'Here C. Lamb loved his brethren of mankind.' Everybody will come there to love. As I can't well put my own name, I shall put about a subscription:

Mrs. ———	£0	5	0	
Procter,	0	2	6	
G. Dyer,	0	1	0	
Mr. Godwin,	0	0	0	
Mrs. Godwin,	0	0	0	
Mr. Irving,				a watch chain.
Mr. ———				the proceeds of —— first edition.
	£0	8	6	

I scribble in haste from here, where we shall be some time. Pray request Mr. ——— to advance the guinea for me, which shall faithfully be forthcoming; and pardon me that I don't see the proposal in quite the light that he may. The kindness of his motives, and his power of appreciating the passage, I thoroughly agree in.

With most kind regards to him, I conclude,

Dear madam, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

In My Own Album

(1827.)

Fresh clad from heaven in robes of white,
A young probationer of light,
Thou wert, my soul, an Album bright,

A spotless leaf; but thought, and care,
And friend and foe, in foul or fair,
Have 'written strange defeatures' there;

And Time, with heaviest hand of all,
Like that fierce writing on the wall,
Hath stamp'd sad dates—he can't recall;

And error, gilding worst designs—
Like speckled snake that strays and shines—
Betrays his path by crooked lines;

And vice hath left his ugly blot;
And good resolves, a moment hot,
Fairly began—but finish'd not;

And fruitless, late remorse doth trace—
Like Hebrew lore, a backward pace—
Her irrecoverable race.

Disjointed numbers; sense unknit;
Huge reams of folly; shreds of wit;
Compose the mingled mass of it.

My scalded eyes no longer brook
Upon this ink-blurr'd thing to look—
Go, shut the leaves, and clasp the book.

Free Thoughts on Several Eminent Composers

(1830.)

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites; for my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel.—
Cannot a man live free and easy,
Without admiring Pergolesi?
Or thro' the world with comfort go,
That never heard of Doctor Blow?
So help me God, I hardly have;
And yet I eat, and drink, and shave,
Like other people, if you watch it,
And know no more of Stave or Crotchet,
Than did the primitive Peruvians;
Or those old ante-queer-Diluvians
That lived in the unwash'd world with Tubal,
Before that dirty blacksmith Jubal
By stroke on anvil, or by summ'at,
Found out, to his great surprise, the gamut.
I care no more for Cimarosa,
Than he did for Salvator Rosa,
Being no painter; and bad luck
Be mine, if I can bear that Gluck!
Old Tycho Brahe, and modern Herschel,
Had something in 'em; but who's Purcel?
The devil, with his foot so cloven,
For aught I care, may take Beethoven;
And, if the bargain does not suit,
I'll throw him Weber in to boot.
There's not the splitting of a splinter
To chuse 'twixt him last named, and Winter.

Of Doctor Pepusch old queen Dido
Knew just as much, God knows, as I do.
I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian Bach (or Batch, which is it ?) ;
No more I would for Bononcini.
As for Novello or Rossini,
I shall not say a word to grieve 'em,
Because they're living ; so I leave 'em.

Last Words on Town and Country

(To Wordsworth, Jan. 22, 1830.)

AND is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage ? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans.* The seasons pass with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom ; autumn hath foregone its moralities—they are 'hey-pass repass,' as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year recurs,—for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore,—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins ; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle, called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them ; with the garden but to see it grow ; with the taxgatherer but to hear him knock ; with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed

we know not how; quietists,—confiding ravens. We have the *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dullness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O! never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I would gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snoring of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teazing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half a dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlooked ginger-bread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford-street; and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled,—(marry, they just begin to be conscious of *Redgauntlet*;) to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry stockbrokers; the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet-street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. O! let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange

of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country any thing better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, play-houses, satires, epigrams, puns,—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for any thing there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; any thing high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind.

The Death of Coleridge

(1834.)

WHEN I heard of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief. [It seemed to me that he long had been on the confines of the next world,—that he had a hunger for eternity.] I grieved then that I could not grieve. But since, I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations. He was a Grecian (or in the first form) at Christ's Hospital, where I was deputy Grecian; and the same subordination and deference to him I have preserved through a life-long acquaintance. Great in his

writings, he was greatest in his conversation. In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should allow every one his share of talk. He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight, yet who ever would interrupt him,— who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion? He had the tact of making the unintelligible seem plain. Many who read the abstruser parts of his 'Friend' would complain that his works did not answer to his spoken wisdom. They were identical. But he had a tone in oral delivery, which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients. He was my fifty years old friend without a dissension. Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seemed to love the house he died at more passionately than when he lived. I love the faithful Gilmans more than while they exercised their virtues towards him living. What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel.

CHS. LAMB.

EDMONTON,

November 21, 1834

NOTES

HAZLITT ON LAMB

PAGE 1. These reminiscences of Hazlitt cannot be referred to a later date than 1814. The first of the 'Scotch Novels', *Waverley* (see p. 2, l. 24), appeared in that year. Lamb became a friend of Hazlitt's in 1804.

l. 24. *the Small-coal man*. Thomas Britton (1654–1714), a coal dealer in Clerkenwell, inhabited a loft over his coal-house, and on Thursday evenings for almost forty years concerts were given in this room in which the greatest performers of the day, including Handel, took part. To the end of his life he carried his coal sacks in the streets.

PAGE 2, l. 1. *John Buncle*. *The Life of John Buncle, Esq.*, by Thomas Amory (? 1691–1788), first published in two volumes, 1756–66, was a favourite book of Hazlitt's, who has an essay on it in *The Round Table*. It records the adventures, as he there phrases it, of 'a great philosopher, mathematician, anatomist, chemist, philologist, with a good appetite, the best spirits, and an amorous constitution'.

l. 16. *And in our flowing cups*. See *Henry V*, IV. iii. 51–5.

l. 22. *Claude's landscapes*. Claude Gellée le Lorrain (? 1600–82) shares with Poussin the headship of the French school of idealized landscape.

l. 23. *the Cartoons at Hampton Court*: by Raphael, representing the deeds of Christ and the Apostles. Hazlitt describes them in an essay on 'The Pictures at Hampton Court' (*Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in England*, 1824).

l. 28. *Junius*. A number of letters under this pseudonym in *The Public Advertiser* between November 1768 and January 1772 assailed the Court and Parliament, and especially the Duke of Grafton and Lord North, in a mordant and forcible style. The problem of the author's identity long teased the public. The evidence points to Philip Francis, the adversary of Warren Hastings (see Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings*).

l. 29. *Gil Blas*. This work, a masterpiece in the humorous romance of adventure, by Alain René Lesage (1668–1747), appeared uncompleted in 1715, and was finished in 1735.

PAGE 8, l. 8. *banquet in Paradise Regained*, ii. 337 f.

l. 24. *rappee*, French *tabac râpé*, a coarse kind of snuff.

l. 27. '*two for his Nob*'. A Nob in cribbage is a knave of the same suit as the turn-up; he scored two points as the holder of this. The score cannot be made unless the player says: 'One (or two) for his nob.'

l. 29. *Ned Philips*, or Phillips, a colonel in the Army, brother-in-law of Captain Burney, whom he accompanied

on one of Cook's voyages. Leigh Hunt speaks of his 'jovial face blooming with a second youth'.

l. 30. *There was* ——. No doubt John Rickman, that 'pleasant hand'. See p. 101, l. 7, and *Life and Letters*, ed. Williams, 1911, p. 128.

l. 33. *Baron Munchausen*, Hieronymus Karl Friedrich (1720–97), a Hanoverian nobleman, who fought in Russia against the Turks, and told extraordinary stories of his prowess as a soldier and sportsman. These were served up to the British public by Erich Raspe, a necessitous German in London, in 1785, as *Baron Munchausen's Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia*. The name became a byword for fantastical mendacity.

l. 34. *Captain Burney*, Rear-Admiral James Burney (1750–1821), brother of Fanny Burney; he sailed with Captain Cook on two of his voyages, and wrote a *History of the Voyages and Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean* (1803–17). Hunt describes him on these evenings as 'wrapped up in his tranquillity and his whist'.

PAGE 4, l. 2. *Falstaff's Letters,—Original Letters of Sir John Falstaff and his Friends* (1796), a book which Lamb encouraged, and probably assisted, the author to write. James White (d. 1820) was Lamb's schoolfellow at Christ's Hospital, and was subsequently employed in the Treasurer's office there. The dinner he gave to chimney-sweepers at Smithfield on the yearly return of St. Bartholomew's Fair is described in Lamb's essay *On Chimney-Sweepers*.

l. 3. *turning like the latter end*, from one of the letters, quoted in Lamb's review of the book in *The Examiner*, September 1819.

l. 4. *Ayrton*, William (1777–1858), musical critic and Director of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket.

l. 5. *Will Honeycomb*, a member of the 'Club' described in *The Spectator*; a dandy and ladies' man, but ingenuous.

l. 6. *Mrs. Reynolds*, Lamb's old schoolmistress, whom he afterwards supported.

l. 11. *Martin Burney*, the Admiral's son (1788–1853), a barrister to whom Lamb dedicated his prose *Works* in 1818, in verses which betray a deep affection.

l. 15. *Transcendental Philosophy*, the new idealist philosophy founded by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781.

l. 16. *the author of the Road to Ruin*, Thomas Holcroft (1745–1809), dramatist and Radical. His *Road to Ruin* is still occasionally acted. Hazlitt completed his *Memoirs*, 1816.

PAGE 5, l. 6. *Biographia Literaria*, by Coleridge, 1817.

l. 7. *An event*, the battle of Waterloo; see note to p. 15, l. 35.

l. 10. *like angels' visits*, Blair, *The Grave*, l. 582: 'Like those of angels, short and far between.'

l. 17. *Douce*, Francis (d. 1834), keeper of the manuscripts at the British Museum.

l. 20. *Leigh Hunt* came of an old Barbadian family.

PAGE 6, l. 27. *in his habit*: *Hamlet*, III. iv. 134.

l. 30. *Fulke Greville*, Lord Brooke (1554–1628), besides his *Life* of Sir Philip Sidney, wrote tragedies, poems, and tracts, and notably a series of sonnets called *Cælica*.

PAGE 7, l. 24. *wished that mankind*, &c.: *Religio Medici*, pt. ii, sect. ix.

l. 26. *Prologues*: the Prologue to Fulke Greville's *Alaham*.

PAGE 8, l. 10. *Here lies*,— from Donne's *Epithalamion on the Lady Elizabeth and Count Palatine*, vii.

l. 19. *Patty Blount*,—Martha Blount, Pope's companion and friend.

l. 33. *one to Lord Cornbury*, in Pope's Imitation of Horace, *Epistles*, I. vi. 60.

PAGE 9, l. 2. *Lord Mansfield*, William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice. The lines quoted (id. 52) prophesied truly his interment in the Abbey.

l. 10. *Why rail they then*: *Epilogue to the Satires*, ii. 138. Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), supplied Pope with much of the philosophy of *The Essay on Man*.

l. 14. *his list of early friends*,—*Epistle to Arbuthnot*, ll. 135–46.

PAGE 10, l. 8. *Gay's verses to him*,—*Mr. Pope's Welcome from Greece*, by John Gay (1685–1732), best known for his *Fables* and *Beggar's Opera*.

l. 14. *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (1689–1762), famous as a beauty and a wit, and for her letters. Her friendship with Pope ended in a bitter feud. As daughter of the Duke of Kingston she would ride in a 'coronet-coach'.

l. 16. *Erasmus Phillips*, a friend of the Burney's.

l. 23. Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) was a London printer. His first book, *Pamela* (1740), in which a virtuous housemaid is courted by her master's son, was parodied by Henry Fielding in *Joseph Andrews* (1742); *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754) came out in seven volumes.

PAGE 11, l. 10. *Barron Field* (1786–1846), lawyer and man of letters, later judge of the High Court in New South Wales. Lamb's essay on *Distant Correspondents* is addressed to him, and he is the friend who accompanies Charles and Mary in the idyll of *Mackery End*.

l. 13. *Wildair*,—Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's *Constant Couple*; *Abel Drugger*, in Jonson's *Alchemist*.

l. 23. *Mustapha and Alaham*, two tragedies by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. See note to p. 6, l. 30.

l. 26. *Webster*, John (? 1580–1625), is supposed to have been parish clerk of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and the surmise is thought to be supported by his frequent descriptions of death and burial. His masterpieces are *The White Devil* (1608 ?) and the *Duchess of Malfi* (before 1614).

l. 27. *Decker*, Thomas (? 1570–? 1641). This was not Hazlitt's

opinion. Decker excelled in racy portraiture of common types (*The Shoemaker's Holiday*), and in subtle portraiture of women (*The Witch of Edmonton*).

l. 28. *Heywood*, Thomas (dates unknown), the most prolific of Elizabethan playwrights. He owned to having entirely or partly written 220 dramas, of which *The Woman Killed with Kindness* is considered the best.

l. 32. *a vast species alone*,—Cowley, *The Praise of Pindar*, l. 2.

PAGE 12, l. 1. *Ben Jonson* (1573–1637) journeyed to Scotland on foot in 1618, and for about a month stayed with Sir William Drummond of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh.

l. 4. *Godwin*, William (1756–1836), author of *Political Justice* (1793), and an expert egotist.

l. 9. *Eugene Aram* (1704–59), a self-educated man, who became a schoolmaster, and left philological writings of considerable value. He was executed for murdering a supposed accomplice in fraud. In 1832 Bulwer Lytton depicted him in a novel as the murderer with a conscience.

l. 10. *the 'Admirable Crichton'*, James Crichton (1560–85 ?), a native of Dumfriesshire. His phenomenal attainments in twelve languages, in theology and mathematics, and as a rider and swordsman, were sensationally displayed in France and Italy in the last eight years of his short life.

l. 26. *the Duchess of Bolton*, Lavinia Fenton, the actress who played Polly Peachum in Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728), and eventually married the third Duke of Bolton.

l. 27. *Captain Sentry*, the modest and gallant soldier of the 'Club' in *The Spectator*.

l. 33. *John Barleycorn*. The allusion is to Burns's ballad of this name, in praise of whisky.

PAGE 13, l. 11. *Leonardo* da Vinci (1452–1519), in whom the Tuscan School of painting attained its height. He was also sculptor and architect, and as an engineer advanced the study of the lever, the principles of which Archimedes of Syracuse (third century B.C.) was the first to formulate.

l. 13. *Raphael* (1483–1520), regarded as the greatest painter of the Italian Renaissance. The Fornarina is the 'little bakeress' or 'baker's daughter', who was his mistress.

l. 15. *Lucretia Borgia* (?1478–1519), sister of the notorious Cesare Borgia, a beautiful and cultured woman, to whom a heroic temper and nameless crimes have been imputed on equally uncertain evidence.

Michael Angelo (1475–1564), the most famous of the Florentine artists of the Renaissance.

l. 17. *Correggio* (1494–1534) excelled by the grace and delicacy of his figures and faces and his mastery of colour, and was fond of painting Madonnas and angels.

Titian (1477–1576) shares with Tintoretto the headship of the Venetian School. His portrait of his mistress is in the National Gallery at Vienna.

l 18. *Giorgione* (1478–1511), one of the great Venetian painters. Titian finished some of his uncompleted work.

Guido (1575–1642), a prime master in the Bolognese School. His masterpiece was a vast fresco in the garden-house of the Rospighosi Palace at Rome, entitled: 'Phoebus and the Hours preceded by Aurora.' He was an inveterate gambler.

l. 20. *Claude*: see note to p. 2, l. 22. A 'Claude glass' is a small convex mirror that gives a reduced reflection of a landscape in subdued tones.

Rubens, Peter Paul (1577–1640), the greatest of the Flemish painters. The allusion is to his vivid pictures of animal life and bacchanalian revels.

l. 21. *Vandyk* (1599–1641), the portrait-painter of Charles I's Court.

l. 22. *Rembrandt* (1606–69), the great Dutch painter. His fondness for jewelry and rich apparel is especially noticeable in numerous portraits of his wife.

l. 30. *Giotto* (1266–1327), the greatest of the earlier Italian masters, and the maker of the Tuscan School of fresco-painting.

Cimabue of Florence (1240–1302), Giotto's instructor.

Ghirlandaio: Domenico di Tomaso Bigordi (1449–94), called Il Ghirlandaio, or 'the garland-maker', another of the Tuscan masters.

Page **14**, l. 5. *G. J——*: not identified.

l. 6. *Legend of Good Women*, alluding to Chaucer's poem.

l. 12. *the Duchess of Newcastle*,—Margaret Cavendish (? 1624–74), authoress of voluminous works of poetry and philosophy, dramas, a *Life* of her husband (who was a pillar of the royalist cause), and an autobiography. See p. 143.

Mrs. Hutchinson,—Lucy (b. 1620), wife of Colonel Hutchinson, the regicide, whom she managed to save from execution in 1660, and of whom she wrote a *Life*.

l. 15. *there was already one*, presumably Mary Lamb.

l. 18. *Ninon de l'Enclos* (1616–1706), a beauty and wit, whose house in Paris was a centre of literature and gallantry.

l. 33. *Tamerlane* (d. 1405), Mongolian conqueror of the Middle East.

Ghengis Khan, Mongolian conqueror of Central Asia and Northern China in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

Page **15**, l. 19. *Leonardo's very fine one*, 'The Last Supper'.

l. 22. *Oh, ever right, Menenius*,—*Coriolanus*, II. i. 210.

l. 35. *that night . . . no dawn*, the fall of Napoleon, of whom Hazlitt was a passionate admirer. His exasperation at the triumph of the allied kings led to his estrangement from the principal members of Lamb's circle.

Page **16**, l. 1. *our little Congress . . . the great one*. The Congress of Vienna assembled in the autumn of 1814, and broke up a few days before Waterloo. The diplomats assembled again for the second Peace of Paris.

l. 18. *shuffle off this mortal coil*: *Hamlet*, III. i. 67.

PAGE **17**, l. 3. *The self-applauding bird*: Cowper, *Truth*, 58 f.
ll. 21–4. *New-born gauds*, &c.: *Troilus and Cressida*, III. iii. 176–9.
l. 25. *do not in broad rumour lie*. See *Lycidas*, ll. 78–82.

PAGE **18**, l. 12. *the stranger on the grate*, a flake of soot hanging at the bar of a grate, supposed to denote the approach of a stranger.
l. 33. *beyond the bills of mortality*. In 1592 the London Company of Parish Clerks began to publish returns of mortality for 109 parishes in and round London. The district covered by these returns was said to be 'within the bills of mortality'.

PAGE **19**, l. 6. *fine fretwork*, &c.: see p. 109, l. 16.
l. 16. *the chimes at midnight*: 2 *Henry IV*, III. ii. 232.
l. 17. *cheese and pippins*: *Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. ii. 13; and 2 *Henry IV*, V. iii.
l. 24. *St. John's Gate* was part of an old priory of the Knights of St. John, a little to the west of the Charterhouse.
l. 26. *Gentleman's Magazine*, founded by Edward Cave in 1732. Johnson, when a young man, was on its staff.
l. 27. *Watling-street*, an old street so named runs east from St. Paul's Churchyard to the junction of Queen Street and Queen Victoria Street. The Roman Watling Street from Dover to Chester did not enter the City, but crossed the Thames at Westminster.
l. 32. *a certain writer*, Hazlitt himself, whose three papers on Guy Fawkes in *The Examiner* in 1821 anticipated Lamb's paper on the same subject in *The London Magazine* (Nov. 1823).

PAGE **20**, l. 7. *Junius*. See note to p. 2, l. 28.
l. 14. *Parnell*, Thomas (1670–1718), an Ulster clergyman and minor poet, befriended by Swift and Pope.

PAGE **21**, l. 19. *to have coined his heart*. See *Julius Caesar*, IV. iii. 72.
l. 29. *procured him civic honours*, in 1823.

DE QUINCEY ON LAMB

PAGE **22**, l. 1. Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859) was resident at Worcester College, Oxford, from 1803 to 1808.
l. 11. *the sea-nymph's marriage*: in Book VI.
l. 22. *High-born Helen and . . . imitations of Burton*, both printed at the end of *John Woodvil: a Tragedy* (1802).

PAGE **26**, l. 22. *The many men*,—*The Ancient Mariner*, l. 236.

PAGE **29**, l. 25. *Oh, he was good*, &c. Wordsworth, *Lines written after the death of Charles Lamb*, l. 38.
l. 28. '*poor Pink*', a family nickname for Richard De Quincey, a younger brother, an officer in the Navy.
l. 31. *Salvator Rosa*, Italian landscape painter of the seventeenth century.

PAGE **30**, l. 15. *West*, Benjamin (1738–1820), President of

the Royal Academy in succession to Reynolds. Most of his pictures were historical or scriptural.

PAGE 31, l. 35. *Wilson*, John (1785–1854), the 'Christopher North' of *Blackwood's Magazine*, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, and a close friend of De Quincey's.

PAGE 34, l. 9. *Will Wimble*, a typical country gentleman, a friend of Sir Roger's. See *Spectator*, No. 108.

l. 33. *Hippel*, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–96), writer of novels, poems, and treatises on ethics and education.

Harmann, i.e. Johann Georg Hamann (1733–88), 'the Magus of the North', a philosopher of Königsberg, master of a cryptic style, and an assailant of rationalism.

Richter (1763–1825), author of numerous novels and other writings, and perhaps the greatest of German humorists.

PAGE 38, l. 26. *the fabled Regulus*. M. Atilius Regulus, Roman Consul, invaded Africa in 256 B.C., during the First Punic War, and was utterly defeated and taken prisoner. After five years' imprisonment the Carthaginians sent him to Rome to negotiate peace, which at his own instigation was refused. He returned, and was barbarously put to death.

PAGE 40, l. 1. *Περιπέτεια* (peripeteia): 'reversal of fortune', a technical term of dramatic criticism among the Greeks.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

PAGE 42. *Childhood in the Temple*. 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple' was first published in *The London Magazine* of September 1821.

The Temple stands on the site of the ancient seat of the Knights Templars, of which, however, only the church survives, the other buildings being of Elizabeth's time or later. Soon after the suppression of the order in 1312, the estate passed to the Knights Hospitallers, who in the reign of Edward III let it to some professors of law from one of the inns. These original tenants divided into the societies of the Inner and the Middle Temple, each with its own part of the buildings; and the two bodies, with Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn, constituted, as they still do, the four Inns of Court, with the various Inns of Chancery affiliated to one or other of them. Inns of Court consist of students and barristers, and of the benchers, who are usually chosen from the barristers of the society on their becoming King's Counsel.

l. 9. *There when they came*: *Prothalamion*, 132–6.

l. 21. *Of building strong*. The verse is Lamb's own, and refers to 'Paper Buildings' in the Temple facing those named after Simon Harcourt, Lord Chancellor in 1713. *hight* is an old form deriving from OE. *hatan*, to be called.

PAGE 43, l. 15. *Ah! yet doth beauty*: Shakespeare, Sonnet civ.

l. 32. *carved . . . sun*: *3 Henry VI*, II. v. 24; *quaintly*, skilfully.

l. 34. *Marvell*, Andrew (1621–78), poet and satirist, joint Latin Secretary with Milton under Cromwell.

PAGE 45, l. 2. *The South-Sea House*, the offices of the South-Sea Company. See p. xv (1791) and p. 108 with note.

PAGE 46, l. 2. *J——ll.* Joseph Jekyll (d. 1837) became Bencher of the Inner Temple in 1795, and later filled the highest of its offices, that of Treasurer. He sat without distinction as M.P. for Calne, but was famous as a diner-out and a wit.

l. 4. *Thomas Coventry* (d. 1797) was a Governor of Christ's Hospital, and probably secured Lamb his clerkship in the South-Sea House.

l. 11. *shunned an Elisha bear.* See 2 Kings ii. 23–4.

l. 23. *Samuel Salt* (d. 1792), Bencher of the Inner Temple 1782, afterwards Treasurer. He sat for Liskeard and afterwards for Aldeburgh on the Whig side for many years.

PAGE 47, l. 1. *Lovel.* The name stands for John Lamb, Charles's father. See p. xv.

l. 16. *the unfortunate Miss Blandy*, executed in 1752 for poisoning her father, an attorney of Henley-on-Thames.

PAGE 48, l. 4. *Susan P——*, Susannah Pierson, sister of another bencher. Lamb did not know, when he wrote this, that Salt had married young, had lost his wife in the first year of marriage, and had never quite recovered. He gracefully apologizes in a postscript to the Essay.

l. 6. *B——d Row.* Bedford Row, near Gray's Inn.

l. 20. *moidore*, an old Portuguese coin, worth in pre-war value some twenty-seven shillings.

l. 21. *Serjeant's Inn* ceased to be an inn of court in 1877. It was reserved to Serjeants-at-law (*servientes ad legem*), a superior order of barrister abolished in 1880.

l. 24. *North Cray*, close to Bromley in Kent.

l. 29. *Hic currus et arma fuēre*, adapted from Virgil, *Aeneid*, i. 16.

l. 33. *the mad Elwes*, John Elwes (1714–89), at one time a Member of Parliament. Though a man of large property in London and the country, and worth half a million, he suffered at the end of his life from the fear of poverty and starvation.

PAGE 49, l. 16. *flapper.* The savants of Laputa in *Gulliver's Travels* (Pt. III, ch. ii) keep domestics whose business it is to flap their masters in the face with blown bladders fixed to the ends of sticks, in order to awake them from intense musing.

l. 24. *would strike.* See *1 Henry IV*, II. i. 85.

PAGE 50, l. 3. *next to Swift and Prior*, in their manner. He published a volume of *Poetical Pieces*.

l. 15. *a remnant*, &c.: from Lamb's own lines, *Written on the Day of my Aunt's Funeral* (1797).

l. 18. *Bayes*, the pompous and incapable playwright, meant for Dryden, in Buckingham's *Rehearsal* (1671).

PAGE 51, l. 3. *old men*, &c.: 1 Samuel xxviii. 14.

l. 10. *Goshen*. There was light in Goshen when the rest of Egypt lay under the plague of darkness.

Mr. Billet, a Poor Relation. The Essay, 'Poor Relations,' first appeared in *The London Magazine* of May 1823. Mr. Billet has not been identified.

PAGE 52, l. 15. *young Grotiuses*. Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) projected a code of international law in his famous *De iure belli et pacis*.

PAGE 53, l. 1. *my aunt*, Sarah Lamb, who died in 1797. She was ten years older than Lamb's father, under whose roof she lived, and cherished an intense affection for Charles, which he returned. It was she who carried his dinner to him at school, as narrated in *Christ's Hospital five and thirty years ago*.

l. 3. *my cousin Bridget*: i. e. his sister Mary. See p. 142.

Blakesmoor in H——shire. First published in *The London Magazine*, September 1824. The name stands for Blakesware in the parish of Widford, about five miles from Ware in Hertfordshire, the seat of the Plumers, where Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, was housekeeper. She is described in *Dream-Children* (p. 145). William Plumer and his wife Elisabeth, Mrs. Field's first employers, were both dead by 1778. A younger William Plumer, who represented Hertfordshire on the Whig side from 1768 to 1807, and resided at the other family seat near Harlow, is mentioned in *The South-Sea House* (p. 115). The house at Blakesware was pulled down after his death in 1822; in 1827 Lamb saw the site of house and gardens covered with corn.

PAGE 55, l. 15. *Actæon*, the fabled hunter, who was turned into a stag, and torn to pieces by dogs on Mount Cithaeron, for having seen Diana bathing (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, iii. 138 f.).

l. 17. *Dan Phœbus*: 'Dan' for 'dominus', as in Chaucer.

l. 18. *Marsyas*, the Phrygian satyr, who challenged Apollo to a musical contest, on condition that the victor might do what he would with the vanquished. Apollo beat him, and flayed him alive (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vi. 382 f.).

l. 19. *old Mrs. Battle*, probably for Mrs. Plumer, Mrs. Field's first mistress. The Mrs. Battle of *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist* is said to be distantly related to the Plumer family, but cannot be meant here.

PAGE 56, l. 16. *Bind me*, &c. Marvell, *Upon Appleton House*, ll. 609–16.

PAGE 57, l. 4. *trenchant*, here 'capable of being cut'.

l. 9. *capitulatory*: 'recapitulatory'.

ll. 29–32. *Damœtas . . . Ægon*, the shepherd and his master in the third Eclogue of Virgil.

PAGE 58, l. 5. *those old W——s*: the initial is fictitious.

l. 6. *the old waste places*: Isaiah lxi 4.

l. 18. *my Alice*, the mother of the *Dream-Children* reverie (p. 145), the Alice W——n of *New Year's Eve*. Her name was

Ann Simmons of Blenheims, near Blakesware; she subsequently married a pawnbroker named Bartrum, of Leicester Square. Mr. Lucas believes that the passion was born early in 1792, when Lamb was seventeen, and died early in 1795.

PAGE 59. 'My First Play' was first published in *The London Magazine* of December 1821. Garrick was manager and part proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre from 1746 to 1776. It was rebuilt in 1791–4 and burnt down in 1809.

l. 31. *my godfather F.*, Francis Fielde. He died in 1812.

PAGE 60, l. 4. *John Palmer* (? 1742–98), for some time the best actor of high comedy, and considered unapproachable in the part of Joseph Surface in *The School for Scandal.*

l. 8. *Sheridan*, Richard Brinsley (1751–1816), dramatist and politician, acquired Garrick's share in Drury Lane Theatre on his retirement in 1776, and became its manager. Miss Linley's Christian names were Elizabeth Ann; Lamb is confusing her with her sister Mary, also an opera singer at Bath.

PAGE 61, l. 2. *St. Andrew's*, in Holborn.

l. 8. *landed property*, a cottage and garden at West Hill Green in the parish of Buntingford, 2½ miles from Puckeridge. Lamb sold it in 1815 for £50.

l. 33. *Rowe*, Nicholas (1674–1718), poet laureate, writer of tragedies, and translator of Lucan. His edition of Shakespeare came out in 1709. *The tent scene*, v. ii.

PAGE 62, l. 7. *fair Auroras.* As Mr. Lucas has pointed out, this is the opening of one of the songs in *Artaxerxes*, an opera by Thomas Augustine Arne (1710–78). The performance of which Lamb is speaking took place in December 1780.

l. 14. *the Universal History*, an encyclopaedic history by several authors, of which the first volumes appeared in 1740. A revised edition in 60 volumes began to appear in 1787.

l. 22. *the burning idol*, the sun.

l. 27. *Harlequin's Invasion*, a pantomime written by Garrick.

l. 31. *St. Denys*, the patron saint of France, who is said to have carried his head in his hands after being beheaded.

PAGE 63. *Christ's Hospital.* The cloisters of the hospital stood in Newgate Street, part of the present General Post Office being built on the site.

PAGE 64, l. 20. *basting the bear*: the 'bear' sits on a stool, holding a rope, which is held at the other end by his 'keeper'. The crowd dash by him, administering stripes, until the keeper touches one of them. The keeper then joins the crowd, the bear becomes keeper, and the captive becomes bear.

l. 28. *solemn processions.* 'On Easter Monday the boys walk in procession to the Royal Exchange, where they wait till the lord mayor is ready to accompany them to Christ Church [Newgate Street]. His lordship and the lady mayoress are there joined by the sheriffs, the aldermen, the recorder, chamberlain, town clerk, and other city officers, with their ladies; when a sermon is preached, and an anthem sung. On Easter

Tuesday the boys walk in procession to the Mansion House, where they have the honour of being presented individually to his lordship, who gives to each boy a new sixpence, a glass of wine, and a couple of buns; after which ceremony his lordship again attends them to Christ Church.'—*History of London*, Thomas Allan (1825). Before 1797 the sermons were given at the Spital Cross, or in a building in the churchyard of St. Mary Spittle.

PAGE 65, l. 1. *annual orations.* On St. Matthew's Day the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Governors went to Christ Church, where an anthem was sung and a sermon preached by an 'old boy'. The assembly then proceeded to the hall of Christ's Hospital, where two orations were delivered—one in English by the Senior Scholar, and one in Latin by the next senior.

l. 6. *Joshua Barnes* (1654–1712), Professor of Greek at Cambridge, editor of Homer.

Jeremiah Markland (1693–1776), Fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge; an eminent classical scholar.

l. 7. *Camden*, William (1551–1623), the great antiquary and historian.

Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago, first published in *The London Magazine*, November 1820.

l. 27. *James Boyer* (d. 1814), head master from 1776 to 1799, a severe scholar, whose sound taste in poetry did much to form the mind of Coleridge. See *Biographia Literaria*, chap. i.

PAGE 66, l. 9. *like a dancer.* See *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. xi. 35, 36.

l. 19. *insolent Greece or haughty Rome*: Ben Jonson, *To the memory of my beloved master William Shakespeare*, l. 39.

l. 20. *Peter Wilkins*, by Robert Paltock (1751).

l. 21. *The Adventures of the Hon. Capt. Robert Boyle*, by W. R. Chetwode (1726).

l. 22. *The Fortunate Blue Coat Boy*, published 1770.

l. 30. *Rousseau and John Locke.* Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) and John Locke (1632–1704) each wrote a book on education—*Emile* (1762) and *A Treatise on Education* (1693)—which laid stress on the advantages of encouraging rather than restraining the natural inclination of the child.

PAGE 67, l. 13. *Helots to his Spartans.* The Helots were the lowest order of the Spartan State, sharing neither the exhausting discipline nor the ennobling privileges of the Spartan training.

l. 19. *the Samite.* Pythagoras of Samos forbade his pupils to speak until they had listened to his lectures for five years.

l. 23. *contrary to Gideon's miracle.* Judges vi. 37, 38.

l. 31. *'playing holiday'*: 1 *Henry IV*, I. ii. 228.

EARLY MANHOOD

PAGE 68. *A Family Tragedy.* In his grief Lamb burnt some books of his poetry, as well as 'a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept'.

PAGE 69, l. 14. *Publish your Burns*, lines included in the poem *To a friend* [i.e. Lamb] *who had declared his intention of writing no more poetry*, and published in a Bristol newspaper in 1796 in aid of a subscription to the family of Burns, who died that year.

l. 17. *Bowles*, William Lisle (1762–1850), whom Coleridge once called 'the most tender and, with the exception of Burns, the only always natural poet in our language'. His *Fourteen Sonnets* (1789) fell into Coleridge's hands at school, and were an awakening influence.

l. 23. *Hannah More* (1745–1833), writer of moral and religious treatises, and originator of the Religious Tract Society.

l. 28. *the Salutation*, a tavern in Newgate Street.

PAGE 70. *The Old Familiar Faces.* l. 7. *I loved a love once.* See note to p. 58, l. 18.

l. 11. *left my friend*, Charles Lloyd (see note to p. 78, l. 28), between whom and Lamb some coolness had arisen about this time in connexion with their joint volumes of poetry.

l. 16. *Friend of my bosom*, Coleridge.

PAGE 71. *Hester.* This was Hester Savory, the daughter of a Quaker goldsmith in the City. She died in February 1803 in her twenty-sixth year, a few months after her marriage to Charles Stoke Dudley, a merchant. She lived at one time at Pentonville, while the Lambs were there. In the letter enclosing these lines Lamb tells Manning that he 'was in love with her for some years, though he had never spoken to her in his life'.

LONDON AND THE LAKES

PAGE 72. *On an Invitation to the Lakes.* The letter from Wordsworth (then at Dove Cottage, Grasmere), to which this was an answer, was sent with a copy of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, and contained a tardy acknowledgement of Lamb's *John Woodvil.* They had met under Coleridge's roof at Nether Stowey in 1797.

PAGE 73, l. 33. *laughed with dear Joanna.* See the poem entitled *To Joanna*, first published in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800. Joanna, a town-bred girl come to the Lakes, laughs at the poet's rapture over the gorse-clad hills.

l. 34. *D.*—Dorothy, Wordsworth's sister.

l. 35. *Barbara Lewthwaite*, the heroine of Wordsworth's poem, *The Pet Lamb.*

PAGE 74. *Return to the Temple.* Thomas Manning (1772–1840), one of the most intimate friends of Lamb's early manhood, was now a mathematical tutor at Cambridge, and

subsequently travelled and resided in the Far East. He was the first Englishman to reach Lhasa, and ranked as the first Chinese scholar in Europe. He came home in 1817.

l. 19. *James, Walter, and the parson,*—in Wordsworth's poem, *The Brothers* (1800).

l. 22. *Exeter Change.* See note to p. 104, l. 14.

l. 23. *the man upon a black horse.* The allusion is to the statue of Charles I on horseback, and the rhyme of 'Ride-a-cock-horse . . . to see a fair lady *upon* a white horse'.

PAGE 75, l. 2. *St. Dunstan's steeple,* in Fleet Street.

l. 6. *her great annual feast.* He is writing in a fictitious character; he was born on February 10, and Lord Mayor's Day is November 9.

l. 14. *Spital Sermon.* This alludes to the ancient custom of the Lord Mayor and his Aldermen attending at a building erected for the purpose in the churchyard of St. Mary Spittle, or else before the pulpit at the Spital Cross, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in Easter Week, in the morning, to hear sermons on the Resurrection. See note to p. 64, l. 28.

l. 15. *Whittington,* Mayor and benefactor of London, died in 1423. The story of his being aided to fortune by his cat is too old to be disturbed.

PAGE 77, l. 5. *Found tongues,* &c.: *As You Like It,* II. i. 16.

The Lambs in the Lakes. The journey here recorded took place in August 1802.

l. 24. *Stoddart,* John (1775–1856), afterwards Chief Justice in Malta.

PAGE 78, l. 3. *dwells upon a small hill,* at 'Greta Hall'.

l. 27. *the Clarksons,*—Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), prominent in the abolition of the slave trade, and his wife. He had a farm and built a house at Eusmere, Ullswater.

l. 28. *Lloyd,* Charles (1775–1839), a Quaker of much talent and sensibility. Lamb made his acquaintance through Coleridge at the end of 1796 or beginning of 1797, in which year all three friends participated in a volume of verse, and Lamb and Lloyd again in 1798 (see p. xvi).

ll. 29–31. *the Wordsworths* were at Calais in August 1802. Wordsworth was married to Mary Hutchinson, of Gallow Hill in Yorkshire, on October 4.

THE THEATRE AND DRAMATIC CRITICISM

PAGE 80. *John Woodvil,* originally named *Pride's Cure,* was composed (first draft) between August 1798 and May 1799, revised in 1800, and published in a small volume in 1802, after being rejected by Kemble at Drury Lane.

PAGE 81. *On Stage Morality.* Lamb's *Specimens* from the dramatists before and after Shakespeare were designed to exhibit 'scenes of passion', and 'to illustrate what may be called the moral sense of our ancestors'. They were accom-

panied by a choice and slender commentary. The study of the minor dramatists of the Elizabethan era may be said to date from this publication.

PAGE **84**, l. 3. *To paint fair Nature*, &c., by Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749–1814), actor and miscellaneous writer.

Foot-note. *Tom Davies, the bookseller* (? 1712–85), author of *Memoirs of Garrick*. He figures in Boswell as Johnson's friend.

PAGE **85**, l. 28. *Mr. K.*, John Philip Kemble (1757–1823), who acted at Drury Lane from 1783 to 1802, and at Covent Garden from 1803 to his retirement in 1817. He belonged to the declamatory school of acting.

l. 29. *Mrs. S.*, Sarah Siddons (1755–1831). Her 'reign' began with her engagement at Drury Lane under Garrick. Lady Macbeth was her most famous part.

PAGE **86**, l. 26. *Enfield Speakers*. The *Speaker*, by William Enfield, a Nonconformist divine, published in 1774, was the most popular book of elocution in its day.

PAGE **87**, l. 6. *Betterton*, Thomas (? 1635–1710), the greatest actor of Dryden's age.

l. 29. *ore rotundo*, 'with rounded mouth', i.e. in smooth and rolling speech (Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 323).

PAGE **89**, l. 2. *they themselves are old*: *King Lear*, II. iv. 194.

l. 5. *the tamperings with it*. Nahum Tate (1652–1715), poetaster and dramatist, remodelled the play in 1681. In his version Cordelia survives and marries Edgar, and Lear is restored. This version held the stage down to 1756, when it was itself adapted by Garrick, who retained the love scenes, and the happy ending, and omitted the Fool. In 1765 Colman produced another version, nearer to Shakespeare. It was not until 1838 that Macready revived the pure original.

Prologue to Remorse. l. 9. *Booth*, Barton (1681–1733), one of the leading actors from 1700 to his retirement in 1727.

l. 11. *Quin*, James (1693–1766), the rival of Garrick.

l. 21. *wish'd a kingdom for a stage*: *Henry V*, Prologue, l. 3.

l. 26. *some hundred auditors*. 'The audience must have been limited to some three or four hundred.'—*Shakespeare's England*, ii. 288.

l. 28. *dread curse of Lear's*: II. iv. 164 f.

l. 34. *lack'd . . . female praise*. The women of the Elizabethan audience sat in the balconies round the 'yard' or pit. The proportion of women to men was small.

l. 40. *air-blest castle*. See *Macbeth*, I. vi. 1 f.

l. 52. *He first essay'd*. The third of the theatres at Drury Lane was burnt down in February 1809. The fourth was opened in October 1812, and *Remorse* was the first tragedy presented in it.

PAGE **91**. *On Bensley's Malvolio*. These pages from the Essay 'On Some of the Old Actors' first appeared in *The London Magazine* of February 1822. Robert Bensley (? 1738–

? 1817) for most of his career alternated between Drury Lane and the Haymarket. He retired in 1796.

l. 8. *Hotspur's famous rant*: *1 Henry IV*, I. iii. 201–8. The theme is, more correctly, honour.

l. 9. *the Venetian incendiary*, Pierre, in Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682), who plots to fire the city, II. ii.

Page 92, l. 8. *Ancient*, ensign.

l. 27. *Baddeley*, Robert (1733–94), excelled in representing footmen, and was the original Moses in *The School for Scandal*.

Parsons, William (1736–95), excelled in the rôle of old man.

l. 28. *John Kemble*. See note to p. 85, l. 28.

l. 33. *a sort of Puritan*: *Twelfth Night*, II. iii. 151.

Page 93, l. 11. *careless committal of the ring*: id. II. ii.

Foot-note. *Mrs. Inchbald* (1753–1821), novelist, dramatist, and actress.

l. 19. *would not have him miscarry*: id. III. iv. 69.

l. 22. '*sick of self-love*': id. I. v. 97.

Page 94, l. 3. *the knight*, Sir Toby Belch: II. iii. 92.

l. 14. *Pursue him*: V. i. 389.

l. 17 *argues highly and well*: IV. ii. 54–60.

Page 95, l. 23. *stand still*, &c.: Marlowe, *Edward II*, 2052.

l. 28. *thus the whirligig of time*, &c.: *Twelfth Night*, V. i. 384.

THE MIDDLE YEARS

Page 96, l. 22. *minor poetry*. See p. xvii (1809).

l. 27. *Holcroft*. See note to p. 4, l. 16.

l. 30. *Tuthill*, afterwards Sir George (1772–1835), physician to several London hospitals and a friend of Lamb's.

Page 97, l. 1. *published a little book for children*. This is fictitious.

Page 98. Robert Southey made Lamb's acquaintance through Coleridge in January 1795. He was now settled at 'Greta Hall', Keswick. His *Roderick the Last of the Goths, a Tragic Poem*, appeared in 1814.

l. 5. Wordsworth's *Excursion* was published in 1814, and the first collected edition of his shorter poems in March 1815, in two volumes.

l. 7. *the brave Maccabee*, i.e. Roderick, the champion or Maccabee of his nation. The reference is to the Maccabee princes of the Jews, who freed Judaea from tyranny in the second century B.C.

l. 13 *Joan of Arc*, Southey's early epic in ten books, 1795.

l. 15. *Madoc*, published in 1805. It is the story of a Welsh prince who, with a band of followers, leaves his country for America, and comes into relation with the Aztecs of Mexico.

l. 29. *the crow on the sand*. See *The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale*, l. 48.

PAGE **99**, l. 1. *Our panegyrist*, i.e. Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795–1854), afterwards Justice of the Common Pleas and Lamb's biographer, and the editor of his letters. He made Lamb's acquaintance early in 1815, and in May of that year was introduced by Lamb to Wordsworth as ' my only admirer ', an allusion to Talfourd's recent article on 'The Chief Living Poets' in *The Pamphleteer*.

l. 30. *'Ban, ban, Caliban'* : *The Tempest*, II. ii. 107.

PAGE **101**, l. 7. *Rickman*, John (1771–1840), a friend of Lamb's from the year 1800. He was an expert in agriculture and political economy, and engaged in Government affairs. ' A fine, rattling fellow . . . can talk anything with anybody.'

l. 12. *Louisa*, the eldest daughter of Thomas Holcroft (see p. 4, l. 16), whose mother subsequently married James Kenney, a writer of comedies and farces, and a friend of the Lambs.

l. 19. *the horse at Charing Cross*. See note to p. 74, l. 23.

l. 23. *a Struldbrug*, in *Gulliver's Travels* (Part III, chap. x) : a species of men and women who are born immortal.

l. 29. *Maclaurin*, Colin (1698–1746), the most eminent mathematician trained in Great Britain in the eighteenth century.

l. 31. *Euler*, Leonhard (1707–83), the most versatile of the great mathematicians.

PAGE **102**, l. 20. *St. Mary's Church*, Great St. Mary's in Cambridge.

PAGE **103**, l. 10. *Gardens of Alcinous*, in the pleasant land of Phaeacia, where Alcinous was king (*Odyssey*, vii. 112 f.).

On Young W. W. This was the youngest of the poet's children, born in 1810.

l. 22. *Virgilium tantum vidi* : the phrase of one of Ovid's regrets in his *Tristia*, IV. x. 5 (Virgilium vidi tantum) : ' I had but a glimpse of Virgil.'

l. 26. *Lord Foppington*, a foolish fine gentleman in Vanbrugh's comedy, *The Relapse*.

PAGE **104**, l. 13. *Halley*, Edmund (1656–1742), the astronomer, and friend of Newton, conducted in 1702 a survey of the coasts and tides of the Channel.

l. 14. *The lion in the 'Change.* Exeter 'Change was a house on the north side of the Strand, once Lord Burleigh's, and called after his son Thomas, Earl of Exeter. In or soon after 1672 the lower part was converted into shops, and the upper occupied by a combined menagerie and museum.

l. 21. *a golden eagle . . . that of Charing* : probably a shop sign.

l. 22. *arride*, please, gratify.

l. 35. *like a sea-beast.* In Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*, ll. 57–65, the motionless old man is compared with a ' huge stone on the bald top of an eminence ', and this again to a sea-beast sunning himself on a shelf of rock or sand. In the Preface to the 1815 edition of his poems, Wordsworth quotes this to illustrate the working of the imagination, which

mediates between the images of the man and the stone by that of the beast.

PAGE 105, l. 2. *ex traduce*, a theological term for the doctrine that the soul of man is transmitted from his parents, in opposition to the view that a new soul is created at birth.

l. 6. *Westminster Bridge*, alluding to Wordsworth's Sonnet.

l. 19. *famous American boy*. Tom Fuller, the 'Virginia Calculator' (d. 1790).

PAGE 106, l. 4. *gentlemen who have undertaken*. The edition, in two volumes, was collected by the publisher Charles Ollier.

l. 8. *published among your poems*. Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects* (1796) contained four sonnets by Lamb; the second edition (1797) contained ten other pieces by him.

l. 11. *cover of the greater Ajax*, i.e. like Teukros, who used his bow and arrows from under cover of the hero's shield (*Iliad*, viii. 266 f.).

PAGE 107, l. 4. *those old suppers*. At the Salutation and Cat in Newgate Street. See p. 69, l. 28.

l. 8. *What words*. Francis Beaumont's lines to Ben Jonson

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words, &c.

l. 15. *alteration finds*: Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, cxvi. 3.

ELIA

PAGE 108. *The South-Sea House*. The first of the *Elia* essays. It appeared in *The London Magazine* of August 1820.

The company was founded in 1710, and received a monopoly of the British trade with South America. In spite of Walpole's warnings there was a rush for the shares, which rose and fell rapidly in the summer of 1720. This was the South-Sea Hoax or Bubble. Thousands of speculators were ruined, and there was panic among traders. The company lost its monopoly in 1807 and came to an end in 1853.

l. 3. *the Flower Pot*, an inn in Bishopsgate Street.

Foot-note. *Ossian*. Poems purporting to be the work of Ossian, a Gaelic poet of the third century, were published in English by James Macpherson, a Highland schoolmaster, in 1760–3. They made a great sensation, which diminished when Macpherson was suspected of having written most of them himself.

PAGE 109, l. 2. *pieces of eight*, the Spanish piastre.

l. 3. *unsunned heap*: *Comus*, 398.

l. 27. *Vaux*, Guy Fawkes.

l. 28. *manes*: Latin for 'shade,' 'departed spirit'.

PAGE 110. l. 9. *three degenerate clerks*. In *Iliad*, xx. 285 ff., Aeneas lifts a stone 'such as two men, as men now are, would not avail to lift, but he himself wielded it all alone'.

l. 21. *Herculaneum*, destroyed with Pompeii by the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The remains were discovered in 1709, and excavations were renewed during the French occupation, 1806–15.

l. 22. *pounce-boxes*. Pounce, or pumice, was a powder used to prevent ink from spreading on unsized paper.

l. 32. *Humorists*, or, as we say, 'characters'.

PAGE 111, l. 15. *Maccaronies*, a type of fop, so named to mark their preference for foreign viands and fashions. They were associated in the Maccaroni Club, which lasted from about 1764 to 1780.

l. 16. *Melancholy as a gib-cat*: a tom-cat, *1 Henry IV*, I. ii. 82; Gib is short for Gilbert.

l. 22. *Anderton's*, a coffee-house in Fleet Street, now an hotel.

l. 33. *Pennant*, Thomas (1726–98), traveller and zoologist, author of *A Survey of London*. He came from Flintshire.

PAGE 112. l. 1. *Rosamond's pond*, a piece of water in the south-west corner of St. James's Park, filled up in 1770; the recognized place for assignations in the Restoration Comedy.

l. 2. *the Mulberry-gardens*, a pleasure garden on the site of Buckingham Palace. It was in existence before the Restoration, but did not survive the seventeenth century.

the Conduit in Cheap. The word 'conduit' was used of the underground channels which conveyed the water-supply of London, and of the cisterns which stored it. The Great and Little Conduits in Cheapside were old buildings containing such cisterns.

l. 5. *picture of Noon*. It represents the congregation issuing from the French church in Hog Lane, now in Charing Cross Road. The building is now the Anglican church of St. Mary.

l. 7. *wrath of Louis the Fourteenth*. The Edict of Nantes, in which Henry IV had promised toleration to the French Protestants in 1598, was revoked by Louis in 1685.

l. 9. *Seven Dials*, an open space in the parish of St. Giles in the Fields, where seven roads meet. There used to be a column in the centre with seven dials on its top, one facing each of the roads. Many of the poor streets to which the name extended have been cleared away to make room for Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue.

l. 17. *strained to the height*: *Paradise Lost*, viii. 454.

l. 32. *house of Derwentwater*. The family name was Radcliffe. James, the third earl, was beheaded in 1715 for taking part in the Jacobite rebellion.

PAGE 113, l. 6. *Decus et solamen*, 'it was your glory, your solace,' *Aeneid*, x. 858.

l. 9. *thought an accountant*: Mr. Lucas points to a passage in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*: Parson Adams 'thought a schoolmaster the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest of all schoolmasters'.

l. 13. *other notes . . . Orphean lyre*: *Paradise Lost*, iii. 17.

l. 20. *breasts*, lungs, singing voices. So in *Twelfth Night*, II. iii. 21 : 'the fool has an excellent breast.'

l. 24. *Midas*, who judged Pan to be a better flute-player than Apollo, and was therefore decorated with ass's ears.

PAGE **114**, l. 26. *sees a lion*: Prov. xxvi. 13.

l. 27. *with Fortinbras*: *Hamlet*, IV. iv. 55.

PAGE **115**, l. 1. *the dusty dead*: *Macbeth*, V. v. 3.

l. 3. *Henry Man* (1747-99), deputy-secretary of the South-Sea House, contributed essays to the *Morning Chronicle*, and had his *Works* collected in two volumes in 1802.

l. 9. *Barbican*, a street in the City, running into Aldersgate Street.

l. 12. *new-born gauds*: *Troilus and Cressida*, III. iii. 176.

l. 13. The *Public Ledger* was a commercial paper, founded in 1759. The *Morning Chronicle* was founded in the democratic interest in 1772.

l. 14. *Chatham*, &c. Man's topics were the American War of Independence and Wilkes's fight with Parliament.

l. 21. This was Richard Plumer, who became deputy-secretary in 1800.

l. 23. *sinister bend*, in heraldry a line drawn diagonally across a shield from left to right is the sign of illegitimacy.

l. 24. *the Plumers of Hertfordshire*. See note to p. 53.

l. 33. *a business of franks*. Johnson's *Life* of Edward Cave (see note to p. 19, l. 26) came out in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in February 1754, and records that Cave, when clerk of the franks, stopped a frank which was given by Plumer to Sarah, the famous Duchess of Marlborough. Until 1840 Members of Parliament had a right to send their letters free by signing their names on the envelopes, which were then called 'franks'.

PAGE **116**, l. 7. *M*——, a clerk called Maynard, who hanged himself in 1793.

l. 9. *song sung by Amiens*: 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind,' *As You Like It*, II. vii. 174–90.

l. 20. *in trying the question*, i.e. in going to law.

l. 21. *bought litigations*, bought up claims which became the subjects of lawsuits.

l. 31. *Henry Pimpernel*, &c. See *The Taming of the Shrew*, Introduction, ii. 95.

PAGE **117**. *Oxford in the Vacation*. First published in *The London Magazine*, October 1820.

l. 4. *quis sculpsit*, the engraver's signature (e.g. *Vivares sculpsit*).

l. 5. *Vivares*, François (1709–80), French engraver settled in London. He engraved many of the landscapes of Claude.

Woollet, or Woollett, William (1735–85), the chief English engraver of his time.

l. 11. *notched and cropt scrivener*. To 'notch' is to trim unevenly. Scriveners used to wear their hair cut short.

l. 14. *agnize*, acknowledge (L. *agnoscere*).

PAGE **118,** l. 11. *Andrew and John*, an adaptation of *Paradise Regained*, ii. 7: 'Andrew and Simon, famous after known.'

l. 14. *Baskett Prayer Book*: published 1713 by John Baskett.

l. 15. *uneasy posture*. He was crucified head downwards.

Bartlemy. According to one legend he preached the Gospel in Armenia, and died there by flaying.

l. 16. *Marsyas by Spagnoletti*. See note to p. 55, l. 18. Jusepe Ribera, called Spagnoletto, 'Little Spaniard' (1588–1656), painted at Naples, dealing much with the painful details of martyrdom. See *Don Juan*, xiii. 71.

l. 25. *far off*, &c. *Paradise Lost*, vi. 768.

l. 29. *Now am I little better*, &c.: cf. *1 Henry IV*, I. ii. 105: 'now am I . . . little better than one of the wicked.'

PAGE **119,** l. 3. *Selden*, John (1584–1654), jurist and scholar. His *History of Tythes* (1617) gave offence to the clergy and was suppressed. He left his books to the Bodleian Library.

Usher, James (1581–1656), Archbishop of Armagh and a friend of Selden's: eminent as an ecclesiastical historian.

l. 5. *Bodley*, Sir Thomas (1545–1613). The Library which he began to form at Oxford in 1598 was opened in 1603, and endowed by him in 1611.

l. 13. *ad eundem*: sc. *gradum*, a phrase used when the graduate of one university takes an equal degree at another.

l. 16. *a Sizar, or a Servitor*,—the first a Cambridge, the second an Oxford, term for students paying reduced fees and performing in return certain duties, such as waiting at table, now abolished.

l. 17. *Gentleman Commoner*. An order of privileged undergraduates, who dined with the Fellows of their College.

l. 20. *bed-makers*, the female domestic servants of Colleges.

l. 24. *seraphic Doctor*. St. Bonaventura (1221–74), Cardinal and Bishop of Albano, the famous scholastic philosopher and mystic, was named *doctor seraphicus*.

l. 30. *beadsman*, a pensioner bound to pray for his benefactor (bead = AS. *gebed*, prayer).

PAGE **120,** l. 1. *Chaucer*. The traditional belief that Chaucer studied at Oxford and Cambridge is now abandoned.

l. 3. The manciple was the purveyor or marketer for the College, as Chaucer's was for one of the Inns of Court.

l. 10. *half Januses*. See Browne's *Christian Morals*, iii, § 22. 'Persons of short times . . . having little behind them, are but Januses of one face, and know not singularities enough to raise axioms of this world.' The Roman god Janus had two faces, looking both before and behind.

l. 30. *scientiall apples*. Milton speaks of the 'sciential sap', *Paradise Lost*, ix. 837.

PAGE **121,** l. 1. *Herculanean raker*. See note to p. 110, l. [illegible]1.

The credit of the three witnesses. The allusion is to 1 J[illegible] v. 7: 'There are three that bare record in Heaven,' &c., which once passed as an article of evidence for the doctrine

of the Trinity. Porson proved the text to be spurious, and it is omitted in the Revised Version.

l. 3. *Porson*, Richard (1759–1808), Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and a very great scholar.

G. D. Lamb's friend, George Dyer (1755–1841), author of *A History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge.* He was laughed at and loved by all his friends.

l. 9. *Scapula*, the Greek-Latin lexicon of Johannes Scapula, first published at Basel in 1579, was frequently re-edited.

l. 12. *Clifford's-Inn*, one of the Inns of Chancery. They were originally hostels for law students who passed from them to the Inns of Court.

l. 15. *apparitors*, officers or ushers of a court.

promoters, fomenters of quarrels and lawsuits; informers.

'*in calm and sunless peace*': *Paradise Regained*, iv. 425.

l. 27. *that long controversy*, now settled in favour of Oxford.

PAGE 122, l. 11. *M's*,—Basil Montagu (1770–1851), jurist and editor of Bacon, and a friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

l. 21. *a Queen Lar.* The Lares of Roman mythology were the tutelary deities of the household. 'Mrs. M.', Montagu's third wife, was a widow; 'A. S.', Ann Skepper, her daughter by her first husband, married Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall).

l. 29. *Sosia.* In the *Amphitruo* of Plautus, Apollo takes service in the form of the slave Sosia, who thus encounters his double.

PAGE 123, l. 3. *Mount Tabor*, in Palestine, fabled to have been the scene of the Transfiguration.

co-sphered. Immortal spirits were supposed to inhabit the stars. So *Il Penseroso*, l. 88: 'unsphear the spirit of Plato.'

l. 4. *Harrington*, James (1611–77), famous for his *Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), a Utopian speculation.

l. 13. *better than all the waters*: 2 Kings v. 12.

ll. 15, 18. *Delectable Mountains, the House Beautiful*: scenes in *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

New Year's Eve. First published in *The London Magazine*, January 1821.

l. 29. *I saw the skirts*, &c.: Coleridge's *Ode to the Departing Year*, l. 8 (first version). Coleridge altered 'skirts' to 'train'.

PAGE 124, l. 6. *Welcome the coming*, &c.: Pope, *Imitations of Horace Satires*, II. ii. 159, and *Odyssey*, xv. 83.

l. 23. *Alice W——n.* See note to p. 58, l. 18.

l. 24. *old Dorrell*, probably William Dorrell, who was a witness to the will of Lamb's father in 1761. He is accused by Lamb in some verses entitled *Gone or Going* of possessing 'a fortune which should have been ours', and of being a 'will-forger'. The exact nature of his offence is not known.

PAGE 125, l. 2. These blank spaces are a trick borrowed from Sterne.

l. 17. *God help thee . . . sophisticated.* Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. i. 129.

PAGE 126, l. 22. *like a weaver's shuttle*: Job vii. 6.

l. 32. *like mellow fruit*: *Paradise Lost*, xi. 535.

PAGE 127, l. 2. *Lavinian shores*: *Aeneid*, i. 2.

l. 18. *sweet assurance*. Cf. *A Friend's Passion for his Astrophel*, quoted in Lamb's essay on Sidney's sonnets:

A sweet attractive kind of grace;
A full assurance given by looks.

Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist. First published in *The London Magazine*, February 1821. Mrs. Battle is believed to represent Sarah Burney, Captain James Burney's wife (see note to p. 3, l. 34), but a few details, like that of her relationship to Walter Plumer, are put in, perhaps for disguise.

l. 31. *one of these flies*: Ecclesiastes x. 1.

PAGE 128, l. 9. *like a dancer*: see note to p. 66, l. 9.

PAGE 129, l. 1. *Ombre*, of Spanish origin, modified in England in the two varieties of quadrille and tradrille.

l. 5. *Mr. Bowles.* See note to p. 69, l. 17. He published his edition of Pope in 1806.

l. 13. *Spadille*, the ace of spades, ornamented with a crown and garter, the supreme card in Ombre and Quadrille.

l. 18. *Sans Prendre Vole*, a term for winning all the tricks (the *vole*) without discarding and taking new cards (*sans prendre*) from the stock.

l. 31. *Machiavel*, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), author of *Il Principe*. His *History of Florence* describes the wars of the Italian States to the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492.

PAGE 130, l. 3. *nob in cribbage*. See note to p. 3, l. 27.

flushes, sets of cards all of one suit.

l. 31. *gallery at Sandham*, an imaginary house.

l. 32. *Potter*, Paulus (1625–54), a Dutch painter especially fond of painting cattle.

PAGE 131, l. 3. '*hoary majesty of spades*': *Rape of the Lock*, iii. 56.

l. 4. *Pam*, the knave of clubs, id. iii. 61.

l. 17. *Ephesian journeyman*: Acts xix. 24, 25.

l. 25. *Walter Plumer*. See p. 115, ll. 21–25 and notes.

l. 34. '*that's a go*', a failure to play in cribbage counting one to opponent.

l. 35. *pegging*, marking the score with pegs.

PAGE 133, l. 17. *size ace* (Fr. *six as*), six and one on the dice.

PAGE 135, l. 4. *tierce, quatorze*, a sequence of three or four cards of the same suit.

The Old and the New Schoolmaster. First published in *The London Magazine*, May 1821.

l. 26. *Ortelius*, Abraham (1527–98), of Antwerp, who published the first atlas, *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, in 1570.

Arrowsmith, Aaron (1750–1823), the chief geographical publisher of Lamb's day.

l. 30. *Van Diemen's Land*, now Tasmania.

l. 31. *dear friend*, Barron Field ; see note to p. 11, l. 10.

PAGE **136**, l. 12. *the four great monarchies*, the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman.

l. 15. *M.*,—Manning, see note to p. 74.

l. 20. *small Latin and less Greek*, said of Shakespeare by Ben Jonson in the lines *To the Memory of my Beloved Master William Shakespeare* (l. 31), prefixed to the First Folio of 1623.

l. 24. *on Devon's leafy shores* : Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, iii. 518.

PAGE **137**, l. 6. *between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell*, i.e. on the way to Dalston. Cf. p. 108, l. 4.

l. 31. *Norton Falgate*, or Folgate, a continuation of Bishopsgate Street to Shoreditch.

PAGE **138**, l. 6. *what song the Sirens sang*, &c. See *Urn Burial*, ch. v, where these questions are thought to be 'not beyond all conjecture'. The hiding of young Achilles, disguised as a woman, was a device of his mother, who knew he would be killed if he went to Troy.

l. 24. *North Pole Expedition*, Sir John Franklin's, of 1819–22.

PAGE **139**, l. 15. *the Lilys* : William Lily (1465–1522), high-master of Paul's School in 1512–22, and joint author with Dean Colet of a Latin grammar, which was written for the school on its foundation in 1509, and became a standard work.

Linacres : Thomas Linacre (? 1460–1524), physician to Henry VIII, and principal founder of the College of Physicians. He was also Latin tutor to the Princess Mary, and wrote a Latin grammar entitled *Rudimenta Grammatices*.

l. 27. *Florilegia*, collections of flowers, anthologies ; *Spicilegia*, with the same meaning, 'collections of ears of corn.'

ll. 30–3. *Basileus . . . Pamela . . . Philoclea . . . Mopsa . . . Damœtas*, characters in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*.

l. 34. *Colet*, John (? 1467–1519), Dean of St. Paul's, one of the foremost humanists of the early Renaissance in England. He founded and endowed St. Paul's School, and collaborated on its Latin grammar.

PAGE **141**, l. 2. *Tractate on Education*, Milton's, addressed to Samuel Hartlib in 1644.

l. 9. *mollia tempora fandi*, 'the compliant moments for speech', adapted from *Aeneid*, iv. 293–4.

l. 27. *Orrery*, a clockwork model of the planetary system, invented about 1700 and named after Charles Boyle, fourth Earl of Orrery.

l. 28. *the Panopticon*, a lecture hall in Leicester Square for the exhibition of scientific novelties and toys.

PAGE **142**, l. 1. *plaything for an hour*, from Lamb's 'Parental Recollections' in *Poetry for Children* (1809).

A Character of Bridget Elia. The Essay on *Mackery End*, from which this is taken, was first published in *The London Magazine*, July 1821. Bridget Elia is Mary Lamb.

l. 19. *the rash king's offspring* : Judges xi. 37, 38.

l. 20. *with a difference*: *Hamlet*, IV. v. 183.

PAGE **143**, l. 11. *holds Nature more clever*: Gay, *Epitaph of Bye-words*, l. 4.

l. 18. *Margaret Newcastle*. See note to p. 14, l. 12.

PAGE **145**. *Dream-Children*. First published in *The London Magazine*, January 1822.

PAGE **148**, l. 12. *when he died*. John, the elder brother, died in October 1821, and this Essay of memories was written almost immediately afterwards. In 1796 his foot had been severely injured by a falling stone, but nothing except this passage indicates that the leg was amputated. Mr. Lucas thinks that the amputation is invented as a means of disguise.

l. 28. *for seven long years*. For the story of Alice W——n see note to p. 58, l. 18.

PAGE **149**, l. 10. *tedious shores of Lethe*: in the Myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*, x. 614 f., the souls of men perform a journey of a thousand years, through heavenly or infernal places, after they leave the body; and having drunk of Lethe, the River of Forgetting, are re-born into earthly life.

A Dissertation upon Roast Pig. First published in *The London Magazine*, September 1822.

l. 17. *M.*: Manning, see note to p. 74.

l. 21. *Confucius*, the great Chinese philosopher of Shantung (? 550–478 B.C.).

PAGE **153**, l. 23. *mundus edibilis*, 'the world of eatables'.

l. 24. *princeps obsoniorum*, 'chief of dainties'.

l. 28. *amor immunditiæ*, 'love of filthiness'.

PAGE **154**, l. 18. *radiant jellies—shooting stars*. There was a superstition that shooting-stars fell to earth in the form of the jelly-like plant called 'star-shoot'. So Donne's *Epithalamion on Lord Somerset*, ll. 204, 205:

> As he that sees a star fall runs apace,
> And finds a jelly in its place.

PAGE **155**, l. 25. *tame villatic fowl*: *Samson Agonistes*, l. 1695.

l. 29. *give every thing*: *King Lear*, II. iv. 253.

PAGE **156**, l. 2. *My good old aunt*. See note to p. 53, l. 1.

PAGE **157**, l. 8. *St. Omer's*, the English Jesuit College, situated some twenty miles south of Calais. Lamb, of course, is speaking as a fictitious person.

l. 19. *Barbecue*, to roast whole (Spanish-Haitian, *barbacoa*, a crate or frame, suitable for this purpose).

Old China. First published in *The London Magazine*, March 1823; collected in *Last Essays of Elia*, 1833.

PAGE **158**, l. 24. *the hays*, or the hay, an old country dance.

l. 29. *Hyson*, from the Chinese, a kind of green tea.

l. 30. *speciosa miracula*, 'dazzling miracles', Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 144.

PAGE **159**, l. 18. *folio Beaumont and Fletcher*, the Folio of 1679. Lamb bought it in 1799. It is now in the British Museum,

and contains marginal notes by Lamb and Coleridge and passages marked for copying.

PAGE **160**, l. 2. *corbeau*, a dark green verging on black.

l. 16. *Colnaghi's.* Paul Colnaghi, print-dealer, was a Milanese by birth. The premises of the firm were in Pall Mall East.

l. 28. *Walton has described*, in his *Compleat Angler*, i, ch. ii.

PAGE **161**, l. 7. *Battle of Hexham, Surrender of Calais*, plays by George Colman the younger (1762–1836).

l. 8. *Bannister*, John (1760–1836), an actor of comic parts at Drury Lane. His acting is noticed in the Essay 'On some of the old Actors'. *Mrs. Bland*, Maria Theresa (1769–1838), a singer attached to Drury Lane from 1789 to 1824. *The Children in the Wood*, a musical play by Thomas Morton, produced at the Haymarket in 1793.

PAGE **162**, l. 34. *lusty brimmers*, from Cotton's lines *To the New Year*:

> Then let us welcome the new guest
> With lusty brimmers of the best.

Charles Cotton (1630–87), of Staffordshire, was a good writer and excellent fisherman, and wrote a continuation of Walton's *Compleat Angler*. He was a great favourite of Lamb's.

PAGE **163**, l. 12. *shake the superflux*: *King Lear*, III. iii. 37.

PAGE **164**, l. 6. *R——*, Nathan Meyer Rothschild (1777–1836), who established a branch of his business in London in 1805 as contractor of State loans.

The Superannuated Man. First published in *The London Magazine*, May 1825, the month of Lamb's release from the India House, collected in *Last Essays of Elia*, 1833. Except for some slight disguises, the essay keeps to the facts of his own life. The first motto is from Virgil, *Eclogues*, i. 27, Libertas quae sera tamen respexit . . . ('Freedom which turned and looked upon me, albeit late'). The second is not from the farce-writer, O'Keeffe (1747–1833), but is traced by Mr. Lucas to a song in George Colman's farce of *Inkle and Yarico* (1787), which Lamb knew on the stage.

PAGE **167**, l. 29. *Boldero*, &c. The names are fictitious.

l. 30. *Esto perpetua*: 'may it endure for ever'.

PAGE **168**, l. 28. *That 's born, and has his years*, &c.: traced by Mr. Lucas to Middleton, *The Mayor of Queenborough*, I. i.

PAGE **169**, l. 17. *a Tragedy,—The Vestal Virgin, or the Roman Ladies.* Sir Robert Howard (1626–98) was one of the playwrights attacked, with Dryden in *The Rehearsal*.

PAGE **170**, ll. 11–13. *Ch——* &c.,—John Chambers, Henry Dodwell, and W. D. Plumley.

l. 15. *Gresham*, Sir Thomas (? 1519–79), founder of the Royal Exchange.

l. 23. *Aquinas.* St. Thomas of Aquino (1224–74), the master of Catholic theology.

PAGE **171**, l. 32. *huge cantle.* See *1 Henry IV*, III. i. 100.

Page **172**, l. 2. *Lucretian*, a reference to the passage in Lucretius (ii. 1 f.) describing the pleasure felt at seeing a ship labouring at sea from the secure vantage of the land.

l. 14. *As low as to the fiends*: *Hamlet*, II. ii. 518.

l. 24. *Opus operatum est*: 'the work is performed'.

Character of the late Elia, by a Friend. First published in *The London Magazine*, January 1823; and reprinted as preface to *The Last Essays*, 1833.

Page **174**, l. 17. *statist*: Elizabethan for 'statesman'.

LATER YEARS

Page **175**, l. 14. *Tædet me*, &c., 'I grow weary of these daily forms'; cf. Terence, *Eunuchus*, ii. 3. 6.

l. 19. *Otium cum indignitate*, 'ease with disrepute', the reverse of the common phrase (see p. 172, l. 20).

l. 20. *Ponder's End.* This and the following places are in Hertfordshire. In the opening sentences of *The Compleat Angler*, Venator 'on a fine fresh May morning goes to drink his draught at the Thatched House in Hodsden'.

Page **176**. *After a Holiday.* Bernard Barton, a Quaker of Woodbridge in Suffolk, wrote four volumes of verse, mostly devotional, and conducted a long correspondence with Lamb.

l. 18. *Juan Fernandez*, the small uninhabited island off the coast of Chile on which Alexander Selkirk, prototype of Robinson Crusoe, was marooned in 1704. Lamb takes it as the type of the desert island of romance.

Page **177**, l. 1. *Southey* (see p. 98). In the *Quarterly* of January 1823 he said that *Elia* 'wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original'. Lamb replied in *The London Magazine* of October in a 'Letter to Southey'. Southey answered privately with generous apologies.

l. 23. *Alcinous.* See note to p. 103, l. 10.

Page **178**, l. 1. *W——*, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, who contributed frivolous essays to *The London Magazine* under the name of Janus Weathercock. Thriftlessness drove him into crime; he was transported to Van Diemen's Land as a murderer and forger, and died there in 1852.

l. 23. *the Fox Journal*, the Journal of George Fox (1624–91), founder of the Society of Friends, to which Barton belonged and in which Lamb was interested. He had procured Lamb a borrowed copy.

Page **180**. *Death of Randall Norris.* Norris was sub-Treasurer of the Inner Temple, and had lived there nearly all his life.

Crabb Robinson, Henry (1775–1867), whose Diary is a record of his friendships with many men of letters.

Page **181**, l. 13. *decies repetita*, 'ten times repeated', *Ars Poetica*, l. 365.

l. 17. The allusion is to Napoleon's projected invasion in 1804–5 in a fleet of flat-bottomed boats.

Basil Montagu (1770–1851), a legal writer and friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

l. 29. *Clarkson*. See note to p. 78, l. 27.

PAGE **182**, l. 2. *Howard*, John (d. 1790), devoted his life to the reform of prisons and hospitals. Lamb disliked his sour self-approval.

l. 26. *Mr. Irving*, possibly Edward Irving, the preacher, who came to London in 1822.

l. 27. Presumably 'Mr. Lamb the proceeds of *Elia*, first edition'.

PAGE **183**, l. 6. *strange defeatures*: *Comedy of Errors*, v. i. 299.

l. 17. *like Hebrew lore*: Hebrew reads from right to left.

PAGE **184**. *Free Thoughts*. The following retort to these lines was written by Mary Lamb in the album of Vincent Novello (printed in Clarke's *Life of Novello*, 1862).

> The reason why my brother 's so severe,
> Vincentio, is—my brother has no *ear*;
> And Caradori her mellifluous throat
> Might stretch in vain to make him learn a note.
> Of common tunes he knows not anything,
> Nor *Rule Britannia* from *God save the King*.
> He rail at Handel! He the gamut quiz!
> I lay my life he knows not what it is.
> His spite at music is a pretty whim—
> He loves not it because it loves not him.

l. 6. *Pergolesi*, Giovanni Battista (1710–36), a writer of operas, operettas, and sacred music.

l. 8. *Blow*, John (1648–1708), organist of Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, composer of anthems and songs.

l. 15. *Tubal*, Tubal Cain, 'an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron'. Genesis iv. 22.

l. 16. *Jubal*, 'the father of all such as handle the harp and organ'. Genesis iv. 21.

l. 19. *Cimarosa*, Domenico (1749–1801), composer of opera.

l. 20. *Salvator Rosa*. See note to p. 29, l. 31.

l. 22. *Gluck*, Christopher (1714–87), composer of opera.

l. 23. *Tycho Brahe* (1546–1601), Danish astronomer and mathematician. *Herschel*, Sir William (1738–1822), or his son, Sir John (1792–1871), both great pioneers in astronomy.

l. 24. *Purcel*, Henry (? 1658–95), the greatest of English composers, wrote both Church and theatrical music.

l. 28. *Weber*, Baron Karl von (1786–1826), *Winter*, Peter von (1754–1825), *Bononcini*, Giovanni (? 1667–1752), *Rossini*, Gioachino Antonio (1792–1868), all composers of opera.

l. 31. *Pepusch*, John Christopher (1667–1752), settled in England as a composer and professor of music.

l. 36. *Novello*, Vincent (1781–1861), composer and musical publisher in London: a great friend of Lamb's, who attended his musical Sunday evenings.

PAGE 185, l. 9. '*hey-pass repass*,' the words of the showman bidding his pictures revolve in the box. So 'hey-presto'—a conjurer's command to his miracle to arise.

l. 17. *Baucis and Baucida*. In the Greek legend Philemon and Baucis are the types of an old couple mutually devoted. Baucis is also a masculine name, and Baucida might be its feminine form.

l. 21. *Scot and lot*, the rates, cf. *Scot-free*.

PAGE 186, l. 2. *otium pro dignitate*, 'ease instead of dignity'.

l. 7. *a stubborn Eloisa*. Peter Abelard, twelfth-century theologian, and brilliant teacher of the University of Paris, was privately married to Héloise, the niece of a canon of Notre Dame. The lovers were separated, and Abelard settled at a hermitage at Nogent-sur-Seine, which he converted into the convent of Paraclete, and handed over to Héloise, who had taken the veil. Here she wrote her famous letters to him, and here she buried him in 1142, and for twenty years prayed daily at his tomb.

l. 13. *Palmyra*, the capital of a desert kingdom east of Syria, which under Zenobia disputed the supremacy of Rome, and was devastated by Aurelian in A. D. 273.

l. 14. *the Seven Sleepers*. Seven Christian youths hid in a cave near Ephesus during the persecution under Decius (249–51), and having fallen asleep did not awake, says the legend, for three hundred years.

PAGE 187, l. 18. *Cathay*, the name given by Marco Polo to a land in the Far East, supposed to be China.

The Death of Coleridge. Coleridge died in Highgate on July 25, 1834. This statement was written by Lamb in the album of Mr. Keymer, a London bookseller, on November 21, 1834, about a month before his own death.

PAGE 188, l. 8. *his 'Friend'*, the periodical which Coleridge conducted from June 1809 to March 1810.

l. 15. *the faithful Gilmans*. James Gillman was the medical practitioner of Highgate, in whose house Coleridge lived from the Spring of 1816 to his death.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD
BY JOHN JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY